

**Statement by Pamela Bridgewater
Ambassador-Designate to Jamaica
Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 27, 2010**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I am honored to be President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Jamaica. I want to express my gratitude to President Obama and Secretary Clinton for their trust and confidence.

I have been privileged to serve for 29 years in postings in Africa, Europe, and the Western Hemisphere. My assignments in Belgium, Jamaica, South Africa, Benin, The Bahamas, and Ghana have afforded me a multifaceted experience.

I welcome the chance to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica, having served there early in my career. The major political parties considered me an honest and fair player then and I hope those in the government, some of whom I have known for many years, will continue to view me in this light if I am confirmed.

Jamaicans and Americans share deep political, cultural, and religious values, and many common elements in our histories. The people of the United States have always had tremendous love for Jamaica and its rich cultural heritage and traditions. Every year, over 2 million Americans visit Jamaica, accounting for

65% of Jamaica's tourists. 106 Peace Corps volunteers live and work in communities across Jamaica today.

Trade and migration account for much of the solid bilateral relationship with our country, with environmental and energy issues taking a greater role in recent years. Equally important are our shared interests in expanding meaningful opportunity for our citizens and ensuring the safety of Jamaicans, Americans, and neighbors throughout our region through effective cooperation against violence.

As one of the largest Caribbean nations, Jamaica is a key partner in addressing our mutual security concerns, including combating drug trafficking and international crime organizations. In May, the United States and its Caribbean partners pledged to work together to address regional security challenges through the new Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. As a member of the Caribbean-U.S. Joint Working Group, Jamaica played a key role in developing this initiative. Now as the chair of the Caribbean community (CARICOM), Jamaica can play a critical role in countering illicit trafficking and transnational crime.

The Jamaican government, civil society, and business leaders have indicated they are willing to confront the criminal organizations that have weakened Jamaica's democracy and hindered its economic growth. This is a historic opportunity for Jamaicans to build a stronger, more prosperous country.

I believe that my experience will help me, if confirmed, advance our interests in Jamaica. Bringing all interested parties to the table to find areas of common ground and giving honest messages to officials in ways that resolve problems are hallmarks of my performance. I also have a strong background in law enforcement

and counternarcotics programs, and have established strong relationships with the U.S. military, the Drug Enforcement Administration, as well as host country counterparts. Trade and commercial advocacy are among my priorities. I have enormous respect for the American and local employees in our embassies and pledge to foster teamwork and positive morale in the U.S Embassy in Kingston.

If confirmed, I pledge to serve our country and cultivate our strong, positive relationship with Jamaica.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your questions.