



## COUNTRY PROFILE



*A member of the St. Thomas Women's Initiative harvesting sweet peppers grown in a greenhouse. Increased frequency of adverse weather conditions and its potential impact on the country's food security have resulted in the increased adoption of protected agriculture technology.*

### OVERVIEW

Located on the "third border" of the United States, Jamaica is a lower-middle income country that has experienced modest long-term growth over the past several decades.



Nevertheless, Jamaica continues to face a variety of development challenges. For instance, the nation struggles with a persistent fiscal deficit and heavy indebtedness. The Planning Institute of Jamaica reports that the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate declined from 2.5 percent in 2006/2007 to 1.2 percent in 2007/2008, while the annual average unemployment rate stood at 9.9 percent, compared to 10.3 percent in 2006. In 2007, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization designated Jamaica as one of the world's 37 most food insecure countries. In addition, the 2007 Global Competitiveness Index ranks Jamaica 78 out of 131 countries. High unemployment rates, pervasive crime, corruption, and a cumbersome business environment are some of the factors impeding Jamaica's competitiveness. Frequent natural disasters impacting key sectors, such as tourism and agriculture, further compound the country's economic and social challenges. As a result of these disasters, key infrastructure, including roads, schools, and hospitals, must be repeatedly rebuilt.

Jamaica is the United States' third largest trading partner in the Caribbean. During the last four years, the United States has also accounted for the largest share of foreign direct investment in the island. Jamaica attracts over 1 million travelers from the United States each year. Hence, the country's political, economic, and social conditions directly affect U.S. national interests.

### PROGRAMS

#### ECONOMIC GROWTH

USAID's economic growth activities are geared toward promoting free market economic policies and streamlining Government of Jamaica (GOJ) regulations. USAID supports the GOJ's reform agenda in land titling, tax revenue collection, and improved credit access and license issuance for businesses.

#### RURAL DEVELOPMENT

There is also a strong link between Jamaica's economy and its natural resource base. The country's major industries, including tourism, bauxite

#### JAMAICA SNAPSHOT

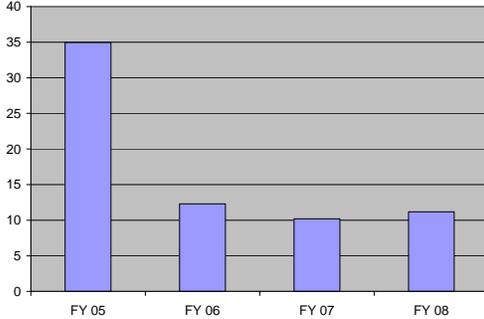
Date of independence: 1962  
Population: 2.825 million  
GDP (PPP): \$20.88 billion  
GDP per capita (PPP): \$7,400

Source: CIA, *The World Factbook*



## COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

**USAID Assistance to Jamaica**  
(Dollars in Millions)



mining, and agriculture, can have adverse effects on the environment. USAID is working in biodiversity-sensitive rural areas to support alternatives to slash-and-burn agriculture and the revitalization of tree crops such as coffee and cocoa. The program supports the agribusiness, eco-tourism, and cottage industries, which provide alternative livelihoods while preserving Jamaica's unique biodiversity.

### HEALTH

U.S. assistance supports the Ministry of Health in reaching marginalized populations in the fight against HIV/AIDS. USAID assisted in the establishment of the Jamaica Business Council on HIV/AIDS (JaBCHA). JaBCHA's mandate is to coordinate the private sector's response, act as a clearinghouse of information in mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on business, and facilitate the adoption of prevention and treatment policies and strategies aimed at eradicating HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination in the workplace. USAID also provides technical assistance to the National Family Planning Board to develop the 2008 National Reproductive Health Survey, which provides data on fertility, family planning, HIV/AIDS, gender norms and violence, and risk behaviors.

### DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

The Community Empowerment and Transformation project focuses on four components: increased citizen participation in security through youth and civic engagement; public education; partnership building; and institutional strengthening. USAID supports the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) by addressing institutional hurdles that hinder the effectiveness and sustained delivery of community policing. The JCF and the Ministry of National Security emphasize that the most serious threats to national security come from gangs and transnational criminal networks. USAID supports the development of a Gang Violence Prevention strategy and sub-regional partnerships between law enforcement agencies and security stakeholders. To increase the level and quality of citizens' participation in security, the project is helping to tackle corruption at various levels by promoting youth participation in civic engagement and helping to strengthen the national integrity system. In recognition of the economic dimension of community safety and security and the direct correlation between youth employment and violent crime, this USAID-supported project supports microenterprise development to create job opportunities through technical, financial, and policy support to the private and public sectors.

### EDUCATION

Through the Expanding Educational Horizons project, USAID assistance helps to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of primary school children; provides educational and life skills programs for out-of-school youth; makes educational financing more sustainable through public/private partnerships, and encourages parent and community participation to improve the quality and relevance of education.

USAID also supports the Caribbean Center for Excellence in Teacher Training (C-CETT) Program, which focuses on the teaching of reading to early primary grade students. The C-CETT is managed in Jamaica and implemented in Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

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