MEDIA RELEASE

“Jamaica is at the table” says JPA Athletes’ Commission’s General Secretary Francis

General Secretary Antoine Francis with AmPC Director Michele Formonte

General Secretary Antoine Francis addresses the forum

General Secretary of the Jamaica Paralympic Association’s Athletes’ Commission and para archer, Anotine Francis, has made a call for the athletes of the Caribbean and Americas to be unified in building synergies in promoting mutual interests.

Commenting on the recently concluded athletes’ forum held in Santiago, Chile, which was hosted the Athletes' Council of the Americas Paralympic Committee (AmPC), with support from the Chilean Paralympic Committee, the Chilean Ministry

of Sports and the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF), Francis said: “The forum provided insight for like-minded individuals who despite the different languages were unified in spirit and purpose to ensure persons with impairments are being given a chance. It was an explosion of ideas as to how we can develop and improve para athletes and invest in them so that together we can continue to make our respective countries proud.”

Francis, however, recognises the responsibility which the ably different community has in fostering a positive culture.

“Jamaica is at the table and it’s for us to now engage, in a real way, schools, parents, public and private institutions and the wider community in empowering extraordinary persons to realise their awesome potential for growth and to instill in society a culture that we are at the table to be seen and heard not with an impairment but as abled persons” he said.

The inaugural forum was attended by over forty representatives of regional para athletes’ commissions and is an essential activity of the AmPC’s stated policy of giving

athletes an instrumental voice in policy making of the ruling regional body and a critical role in shaping its future.

JPA President, Christopher Samuda, who is a board director of AmPC, explained its vision and mission: “The athletes are the pith and kernel of who we are and why we breathe sport and our vision is to create joint ownership of this sporting asset - the Americas Paralympic Committee - of which my colleague directors and I are custodians and the mission is to give them the keys to unlock their aspirations and open wide their ambition to grasp greatness.”

The AmPC owns the Para Pan American Games and junior games which are staged every four years and is the apex body for national Paralympic committees of North, Central and

South America and the Caribbean. The athletes’ fora have been designed to be hi-level working sessions with the main objective being to promote the participation of athletes inactive sports decision-making, representation and defence of their rights, welfare and health while focusing on their fundamental role in the process of awareness and public education. As Francis said, “the forum is about securing, in

and out of sports, the voice and future of persons who are differently abled and re-educating the public."

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