



Prime Minister, the Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller, has charged members of the Pan American Sports Organisation (PASO/ODEPA), to capitalise on the extraordinary potential of sport as an instrument of economic growth and wealth creation.

“In today’s global economy, sport has gained increasing importance and market value. However, prowess in the field has not been fully exploited as an instrument of economic growth and wealth creation, neither for the athletes nor for the millions of fans, whose support continues to fuel athletic excellence in our regions and sub-regions,” Mrs. Simpson Miller said.

She was speaking on Thursday, February 7, at the opening of the Extraordinary General Assembly of the PASO/ODEPA, which is being held at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel in New Kingston from February 7 to 8.

The meeting, which was declared officially open by the Prime Minister, is being attended by some 200 regional delegates and officials from the 41 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) of the Americas, which make up the organisation.

Mrs. Simpson Miller said it is in the region’s best interest to combine the field of sport with the cultural and creative industries, in an effort to fully exploit the market potential that exists.

“The reality is that the region’s sporting performances continues to be outstanding, yet some of our states and member associations have not fully capitalised on the substantive role sport can play within the cultural and creative industry framework of our societies,” she argued.

The Prime Minister said that for some smaller member associations, there is the need to define policies and strategies that underscore the economic and social importance of sport.



“This would bring a greater sense of equity among us and enhance the contribution of the associations to the collective purpose,” she added.

Mrs. Simpson Miller informed that the Government aims to create a larger socio-economic role for sport in the matrix of the country’s cultural and creative industries.

“The central idea is to enhance the economic performance and investment flows around sporting events, sport goods and sport services. In this way, we are nurturing cultural creativity and fostering innovation through an evolving national sports policy,” she said.

For his part, President of the Jamaica Olympic Association (JOA), Michael Fennell, said like the JOA, all members of the PASO/ODEPA are committed to enhancing and developing the sport throughout the regions.

“We will continue to concentrate on the welfare of our athletes; the practice of clean and wholesome sport; the satisfaction and enjoyment of our sponsors and various stakeholders; and promoting the Olympic values,” he said.

Mr. Fennell argued that the task has become much more challenging at a time when there are financial difficulties in many countries within the PASO/ODEPA, “but nevertheless we have to carry out our responsibilities as best as we can.”