

Statement by Her Excellency Ms. Cheryl Spencer

High Level Ministerial Segment – 62nd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

14 and 15 March 2019, Vienna

Thank you Mr. Chair,

The delegation of Jamaica welcomes this opportunity to participate in the 62nd regular session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, particularly during this ministerial segment, at this watershed moment in discussions on the world drug problem.

Ten years ago, the international community agreed to heighten its commitment in addressing and countering the world drug problem. In 2016, Jamaica joined consensus on the outcome document of the 30th Special Session of the UN General Assembly dedicated to this matter as it was clear that there was a need for the international community to cooperate, in the spirit of multilateralism, in order to tackle this transnational scourge.

Today, those commitments remain. However, much remains to be done.

According to the UNODC's 2018 World Drug Report "*...both the range of drugs and drug markets are expanding and diversifying as never before*" and the production of opium and cocaine is at the **highest levels recorded**.

As a small island developing state with porous borders, the world drug problem presents challenges for the health of our nation, the security of our people and the sustainable

development to which we all strive. The trends indicate that this social and economic threat has transformed in nature.

So too must our policies and strategies. We simply cannot address and counter a dynamic problem with static tools.

It is for this reason that the Government of Jamaica, in full consultation with all relevant stakeholders and after careful deliberation, amended the Dangerous Drugs Act in 2015 to respond to the national realities on the particular matter of cannabis.

We remain cognizant of the need for necessary evaluation to ensure that our policies are fit for purpose and, in this spirit, welcomed the Mission Team from the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) in November 2018.

My delegation thanks the team for the manner in which the visit was conducted and note the observations and recommendations which were shared with the Government last month.

We wish to take this opportunity to reiterate that "one size does not fit all" and the necessary policy space to address current economic, social and cultural realities is imperative for a successful outcome.

The Government of Jamaica remains committed to our obligations under the international drug legal framework, even as we highlight those areas that should evolve as the world drug problem is rapidly evolving.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the recommendations of the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence, emanating from its 41st session held November 2018, regarding the scheduling of cannabis and cannabis related substances. We, therefore, note with great disappointment that these recommendations will not be considered in this session. This for us is an opportunity lost in respect of demonstrating that we can change with global circumstances as well as for strengthening the global architecture.

Jamaica reaffirms its commitment to addressing and countering the world drug problem. In that connection, we would like to reiterate our recognition of the CND as the principal policy making Body in the United Nations System for drug-related matters and our commitment to its work. It is for this reason that my delegation remains engaged in the work of this body and hopes to enhance that engagement through our candidature to membership of the Commission for the term 2020 to 2023.

My delegation looks forward to the discussions that will be held over the next few days to take stock of the implementation of all commitments which fall under the Commission's mandates as well as ensure that our future is safeguarded through strengthened international cooperation.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.