

NATIONAL STATEMENT
63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
2nd to 6th March 2020
Vienna, Austria

Chair, Excellences and Members of the Commission.

It is my honour to address the Commission on behalf of Jamaica.

Chair,

Your Excellency, Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad Khan, I wish to congratulate you on your assumption as Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Please be assured of my delegation's full support as you guide our discussions during the session.

I also wish to place on record our appreciation to the Secretariat for the work done in preparation for this 63rd Session of CND.

This 63rd CND Session, represents a seminal moment for Jamaica as we take our seat as a Member of the Commission. We would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to those countries which have shown their support in our ability to positively contribute to the work of the CND.

Jamaica greatly values the work of the Commission and its important role in ensuring that the International Drug Control architecture is a robust and effective one. In this regard, Jamaica's tenure will be marked by its commitment towards advancing the mandate of the Commission and contributing to developing policies on drug control to make it a more effective Commission. In this regard, we urge the Commission to employ a pragmatic

approach in the delivery of its mandate cognisant of the increasing demands of the ever-evolving nature of the world drug problem.

Chair

The Government of Jamaica's commitment to its obligations under the International Drug Control Conventions remains unquestionable. However, we also firmly believe that there is scope for work to be undertaken, within the global drug control framework, which encourages pioneering solutions aimed at ensuring the availability of and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion.

We re-iterate our view that the current international drug control architecture does not sufficiently allow for the requisite policy space to design appropriate domestic policies suited to changing national realities.

Neither does it allow for countries to fully take advantage of new innovations required for their development and to meet the challenges of the social and economic threats stemming from the world drug problem.

Chair,

Jamaica is a small island developing state with porous borders and limited resources which has sought to find innovative means of addressing and countering the scourge of illicit drugs within its national confines and current realities.

It has taken a more "human-centred" approach to its drug policy including its furtherance of alternatives to incarceration for minor drug offense. The Government by way of the 2015 amendments to the Dangerous Drugs Act has sought to respond to the national realities while adhering to our international obligations.

Recognizing the complexity of the issues and that we simply cannot do it alone, the Government has intensified its sub-regional cooperation where they exist and establishing them where none exists with a number of countries via Maritime and Law Enforcement Agreements. The Government also continues to benefit from institutional strengthening and capacity building exercises through our international counterparts in initiatives such as SEACOP, COPOLAD, AIRCOP and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative.

Chair

At the 62nd Session of the CND, In March last year, my delegation placed on record its disappointment that the WHO's Recommendations on the scheduling of cannabis was not considered for adoption. Once more, the recommendations have been placed before the Commission for consideration and we urge that Members to firmly grasp this historic opportunity for the Commission to demonstrate its capacity to operate within the context of an ever changing and innovative world. The recommendations serve to make significant advancement based on scientific knowledge by acknowledging the medical and therapeutic benefits of cannabis. We owe it to the countless millions of persons in need of palliative care; to those suffering from illnesses and disorders such as epilepsy, cancer, multiple sclerosis and wasting syndrome. We owe it to them to provide this avenue of hope where all other options have failed.

Chair,

In closing, 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. My delegation looks forward to the discussions over the next few days and you can count on Jamaica's full and constructive engagement.

I thank you.