

Agenda Item 5 (a)
Changes in the Scope of Control Substances

Explanation of Vote
WHO's recommendation on cannabis and cannabis related substances

Chair,

Today's vote marks a seminal moment in the history of the global drug control framework governing cannabis and its related substances.

Jamaica places on record its appreciation to the WHO's Expert Committee on Drug Dependence for its **first- ever** scientific review of cannabis and cannabis resin, and the accompanying recommendations. We also thank the WHO, INCB and UNODC for their continued engagement with Member States in facilitating greater clarity on the recommendations and their possible implications.

The review served as **reaffirmation** of what Jamaica has always known given its long historical and intimate connection with the plant, as a source of traditional medicine. It was on this basis that we voted in support of majority of the WHO's recommendations.

Chair,

For Jamaica, the results of today's vote are not the end of the journey but rather the beginning as we maintain that the current international drug control architecture does not allow for the requisite policy space to design appropriate domestic policies suited to address national realities, and unique circumstances.

As a matter of context, cannabis is not only embedded in the national discourse on access to medicines, but it is also at the core of discussions on criminal justice reforms and Human Rights, in particular freedom of religion.

Chair,

Jamaica would like to express its appreciation to those Member States who have voted in support of recommendation 5.1 in particular.

It is also hoped that as additional scientific and medical data becomes available that Member States will further explore improving access to cannabis and cannabis related substances for medicinal and therapeutic purposes.

Jamaica wishes to emphasise that this is an important issue on our economic growth and sustainable development agenda.

Chair,

In closing, we reiterate our recognition of the CND as the principal policymaking body in the United Nations system for drug-related matters and our commitment to its work.

We look forward to broader discussions on how to further strengthen the global drug control architecture.