

NATIONAL STATEMENT
64th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
12th to 16th April 2021
Vienna, Austria

Thank you **Chair, Excellencies and Members of the Commission.**

Madame **Chair**, Your Excellency, Ms. Dominika Anna Krois

Jamaica wishes to warmly congratulate you and express our best wishes for a successful tenure as Chair of this 64th Session. Please be assured of my delegation's full support.

I also wish to place on record Jamaica's appreciation to Ambassador Mansoor Ahmad Khan, for his Chairmanship of the 63rd Session and in ensuring the continuity of the Commission's work during what had been a particularly challenging year.

We also thank the Secretariat for its continued dedicated service and support and for facilitating a series of inter-sessional and topical meetings which culminated with the landmark decision on the re - scheduling of cannabis.

Chair,

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact worldwide, causing an environment of anxiety and uncertainty. The pandemic has disrupted global supply and value chains; strained the availability and access to medicines worldwide; and negatively impeded prevention and treatment services. It also has exacerbated drug

use disorders, mental health conditions and further challenged global efforts to tackle illicit trade in narcotic drugs, including illicit trade routes.

There remains to be equitable access to controlled medicines which are critical for general healthcare, palliative care and pain management. Regrettably, this inequity has also plagued the delivery of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics related to COVID-19, leaving the most vulnerable behind.

However, as with many crises there are also opportunities. There is an opportunity therefore to dismantle inequity, as well as to strengthen our global commitment and actions to tackle the world drug problem.

Chair,

This Year marks the 60th anniversary of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the 50th anniversary of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances.

It is therefore opportune for us to take stock, prioritize the review of the current drug control architecture, and to recalibrate the global response to drug control matters. Undoubtedly, the pandemic has impacted us all; albeit to varying degrees of severity, resulting in socio-economic upheaval, as well as leaving health systems on the brink of collapse.

As such, there is an urgent need for countries to be given greater flexibilities in designing policies that reflect their national realities and contexts. In this regard, we

urge the Commission to employ pragmatic and innovative approaches in the delivery of its mandate.

Chair,

In December last year, the Commission voted to remove cannabis from schedule IV of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. This was a major achievement not just for the Commission but for the countless millions of persons worldwide who are in dire need of various treatments. The Commission, by its vote in December, for the first time, gave a long overdue recognition that the medicinal and scientific value of cannabis far outweighs its risks.

We are confident that this is a positive start to the journey towards harnessing the full medical and scientific potential of cannabis world-wide.

Chair,

In closing, 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.