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**Cannabis
Licensing
Authority**
Jamaica

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CLA Reviewing Operational Framework and Strategic Priorities

The Board of Directors of the Cannabis Licensing Authority (CLA) has reviewed its current operational model and discussed initiatives needed to capitalize on Jamaica's potential at an all-day strategic planning session on September 1.

Speaking at the event, Portfolio Minister, The Hon. Audley Shaw, in his opening remarks, noted: "This meeting is timely and critical as we look to develop a strategic plan in line with the Government of Jamaica's requirements. We must urgently chart a way forward to address challenges in the operational arrangements, legal provisions and the mindset of the organization." The Minister added that the Government's vision for the industry is to develop a commercially viable sector that can compete on the world stage with the expected opening up of the global industry.

Under the theme, 'Culture + Strategy = The Path to Success', the CLA planning meeting focused on strategic moves that will push the industry towards its objective of economic development and the organizational culture needed to deliver the strategic priorities.

The CLA categorized its strategy under three broad headings: expanding the local market, social equity and regulatory review. A common thread linking the CLA's strategic objectives was the establishment of the Cannabis Health Product sector allowing licensees to produce nutraceuticals, topicals and infusions.

"Completing the policy framework on cannabis health products is central to Jamaica's ability to maximise the potential of the local industry," said CLA Chairman LeVaughn Flynn. "I'm encouraged by the renewed commitment of the Ministry of Health to work with the CLA in completing this policy. The benefits of this are that it will allow more Jamaicans access to medical cannabis in non-smokable forms, it will pave the way for wellness tourism and it will increase demand for raw material, which is key to creating the market for traditional farmers who will be incorporated under the Cultivators (transitional) Special Permit."

In laying out the Board's expectation of the Senior Management Team, who were in attendance, the Chairman said the CLA's vision can only be accomplished with a motivated staff with a clear purpose and that connects their daily responsibilities to the big vision of the Government.

"This is why culture is so important. It is the engine that will move us towards our objectives," Flynn noted. "So high engagement and morale, trust and unity are tenets that must exemplify the

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Authority's staff." Flynn pointed out that the Authority is currently in a transitional phase where it is realigning the staff to its role as not only a regulator but a facilitator of industry development.

Speaking to the matter of a recent directive issued to a licensee to dispose of 808 crops that were planted in contravention of its cultivation license, the Chairman noted: "As a regulator, we will sometimes have to make uncomfortable and unpopular decisions, but this is necessary to preserve the integrity of the Jamaican industry. However, we have used this as a learning opportunity, and it has allowed us to identify specific areas within the regulations that need urgent review and we have resensitised the staff on more effective communication methods with our clients."

###END###

Notes to Editors:

About the Cannabis Licensing Authority: The CLA, an agency of the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, which was created by the Dangerous Drug Act, has powers to make and enforce regulations for licences, permits and authorisations for the cultivation, processing, distribution, sale and transportation of ganja, for medical scientific and therapeutic purposes.

About Jamaica's UN Drug Treaty Obligation: Parties to the 1961 Single Convention undertake to limit the production, manufacture, export, import, distribution and stocks of, trade-in and use and possession of the controlled drugs so that they are used exclusively for medical and scientific purposes. The production and distribution of controlled substances must be licensed and supervised.

Interviews: Available on request

Images: n/a

Website: www.cla.org.jm

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