



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**INTERVENTION BY**

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**AT THE**

**UNGASS ROUNDTABLE 4:**

*"Cross-cutting issues: new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem in compliance with relevant international law, including the three drug control conventions; strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation"*

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

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Thank you Co-chairs,

Jamaica welcomes this opportunity to deepen the discussion on the multi-faceted world drug problem. One question before us is how to effectively respond to new and continuing challenges within the ambit of an international legal framework adopted over five decades ago.

In recent years, we have seen the rapid emergence of new psychoactive substances; new trafficking routes and modes; the global expansion of the illicit market for synthetic stimulants; abuse of prescription drugs; and the use of new technologies, including cyber technologies, for coordination between traffickers.

Governments are challenged to address these emerging crises while tackling existing obstacles. These include transnational organised crime; insufficient implementation of a health-centred approach; and lack of capacity to systematically compile, analyse and employ basic drug related information.

As we urgently respond to these demands, we must acknowledge that an adjustment in approach is required. We therefore support the call for innovative, comprehensive and multi-dimensional responses. For Jamaica, we see this as an opportune time to re-evaluate the systems that are currently in place – at the national and international level. We ask, are they fit for purpose? Do they take into account domestic realities – the people, the culture, the traditions, the changing environment and expectations?

It is for this reason, that Jamaica amended its Dangerous Drugs Act. We took into account our realities under which the previously draconian law stigmatised a large portion of our human resources and labour force – our young men.

Statistics show that thousands of young men had been imprisoned on charges of possession of ganja in quantities of less than one ounce. As a small island developing state, with a keen focus on human resources, economic growth and job creation, it was imperative to act. Under the new regime, not only have we reduced the burden on our already stretched justice system but 3,457 persons previously convicted for possession of small quantities of ganja, have been expunged from the Criminal Records Office.

We are, however, experiencing practical difficulties in pursuing the use of cannabis for medical and scientific purposes within the limited flexibilities provided under the Single Convention. Cannabis and cannabis resin are listed in Schedules I and IV of the Single Convention and are therefore regarded as substances which are particularly liable to abuse and deemed to produce harmful effects.

A related challenge concerns our domestic banking industry which is reluctant to provide services to clients associated with research on cannabis for medical and scientific purposes. This is because of the risks they perceive given the implications for correspondent banking relationships with their overseas counterparts. Needless to say, we cannot establish a regulated system for medical and scientific use of cannabis without access to banks.

While we make clear our intentions to abide by our international obligations, Jamaica reiterates its call for sufficient policy space to be provided within the international drug control framework, to enable us to address these issues in a manner that is suited to our national circumstances.

We further call for an examination of the international drug control legal framework to ascertain whether it is in need of revision in order to respond to current and emerging challenges to our global efforts.

Co-Chairs,

Jamaica maintains the need for the establishment of a mechanism to evaluate and review the global drug control architecture and make recommendations, for the consideration of Member States, as to how best to recalibrate the global response, taking into account the challenges outlined earlier.

We are pleased to note that there is a concurrent focus on strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and enhanced international cooperation. There is indeed strength in numbers; however, a chain is as strong as its weakest link. In light of globalisation and the pervasive nature of this problem, a concerted, consistent push is needed from Member States and partners to press us closer to the goal.

There is a long journey between today and 2019. Let us define our next steps and get them done together.

I thank you.