



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

**STATEMENT BY**

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE KAMINA JOHNSON SMITH  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE**

**AT THE**

**THIRTIETH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
ON THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM**

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

**WEDNESDAY, 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2016**

Mr. President  
Excellencies,

Jamaica welcomes the convening of this Special Session. We appreciate the opportunity to share and work with the international community, as we evaluate our efforts to date.

The current realities of the world drug problem compel us to formulate dynamic policy responses that complement our development objectives, while adhering to the rule of law. There is a pressing need to develop and implement balanced, multi-dimensional, and innovative strategies.

Given the grave threat that illicit drugs and transnational organised crime pose to our national security, Jamaica has undertaken targeted efforts to address the root causes of these problems. We are finalising a five-year national drug plan, and designing comprehensive demand reduction programmes in the areas of prevention; early intervention; treatment; rehabilitation; and social re-integration. We have strengthened our laws to dismantle criminal organisations, prevent money-laundering, and combat human trafficking.

Mr. President,

In developing policies to address the world drug problem we are cognizant that one size does not fit all. In Jamaica, cannabis has been traditionally used as a folk medicine, as well as a religious sacrament by adherents to our indigenous faith, *Rastafari*. Such specific uses are not associated with illicit large-scale cultivation for trade.

Last year, Jamaica amended its Dangerous Drugs Act. In so doing, we did several things:

- 1) we decriminalised the possession of less than two ounces of cannabis, by making it a ticketable rather than a felony offence;
- 2) we created a legal regime governing the sacramental use of cannabis by Rastafarians;
- 3) we established provisions for the medical, scientific and therapeutic uses of the plant; and
- 4) we established a state authority to license, regulate and monitor the allowed uses.

While adhering to our obligations under the Drug Control Conventions, we maintain that countries should be allowed the flexibility to craft appropriate laws and policies that take account of other important elements. These include differing cultural perspectives and practices, as well as the consideration of the health, well-being, human rights, human development and security of our citizens.

We contend that the classification of cannabis under the Single Convention is an anomaly and that the medical value of a substance must be determined by science and evidence-based analysis, above other considerations.

We will continue to abide by our international obligations, even as we work in close collaboration with the international community on designing balanced and innovative strategies to better address the world drug problem in all its dimensions.

With regard to the follow-up to this UNGASS, Jamaica reiterates its call for the establishment of a mechanism to review the global drug control architecture and make recommendations, for the consideration of Member States, on how best to recalibrate the global response.

We reaffirm our common and shared responsibility to address the world drug problem. We emphasise the need to ensure system-wide coherence and enhanced collaboration between the CND and other relevant UN agencies, including the International Narcotics Control Board, the World Health Organization, the Human Rights Council and the United Nations Development Programme.

Mr. President,

We must move forward to make meaningful and effective progress in addressing the world drug problem. We must place health and human development at the centre. We owe it to the current generation, in particular our young people. We owe it to future generations. Let us not let them down.

I thank you.