



**PRESS RELEASE
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Tuesday, May 14, 2024



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang demonstrates the registration process for the new C5 Electronic Immigration/Customs Declaration (C5) Form at the Norman Manley International Airport on Tuesday, September 5, 2023. Looking on are Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security, Ambassador Alison Stone Roofe (third left), Chief Executive Officer of the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency, Mr. Andrew Wynter and the Commissioner of Customs, Mrs. Velma Ricketts Walker.

National Visa Policy demonstrates Government commitment to border security

The Government continues to demonstrate a profound commitment to border security and creating an enabling business environment for sustainable economic development, with the tabling of the National Visa Policy, (2024) in Parliament today.

In delivering his Sectoral Debate Presentation on National Security at the Houses of Parliament today (May 14), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang emphasised the role that the policy will play in immigration control and border security management.



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The Minister stated that, **“the visa policy aims to make travel to Jamaica easier for business travellers as well as visitors, while protecting our borders”**.

He further added that the policy is **“designed to create the required modern regulations to enhance the entire process of visiting Jamaica while ensuring security”**.

The NVP will establish rules, outline the framework, and define the governance structure supporting the Government’s strategic direction for all relevant stakeholders involved in the visa issuance process.

Additionally, the Policy will create **“a visa regime that facilitates and promotes cross-border travel, as well as greater access to business, tourism, education and culture, while safeguarding national security and public health.”**

The policy comes under the backdrop of the sustained increase in the annual visitor arrivals to Jamaica and the strategic importance of economic growth through seamless travel facilitation, business development and formal exchange programmes.

By developing and implementing a comprehensive policy, the Government aims to leverage the benefits of travel facilitation in economic development, while securing the safety of all residents through enhanced procedures to secure our borders.

When implemented, the policy will set the foundation for alleviating the administrative load on Jamaican diplomatic and consular missions responsible for visa issuance, as well as provide greater flexibility through support for the use of technology in creating efficiencies.

It will also facilitate the application of revised visa requirements, reduction in paper-based processes, improved accessibility, and standardisation of fees.

The application process will be simplified and facilitated through an electronic Visa Issuance System, and visas will include advanced security features.

Minister Chang noted that the **“visitor industry is our most critical economic activity and we have to ensure that we have a system in place to accommodate visitors that gives security assurance”**.

He further explained that the **“visa policy is designed to modernise our border control, regulation and legislation.”**

“Jamaica is an excellent point of transshipment in the Caribbean, which makes it a good place for business, therefore we have to ensure that business travellers can come here without too much obstruction,” Minister Chang explained.

The policy proposes six main categories of visas under the, which will be issued by the Passport Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA), guided by the set criteria. These categories will include tourism or business, employment, student or exchange, diplomats and officials, digital nomads and dependant visa. The policy will apply to all non-nationals seeking entry to Jamaica for whom a visa is required.



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The Ministry will undertake further consultations before the policy is taken to Parliament for approval as a white paper, and subsequent implementation.

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