October 26, 2019

GOJ, OAS Partner to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

The Government of Jamaica (GOJ) has implemented drug control measures, in keeping with the recommendations of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) to tackle drug abuse and the illicit trade. The announcement follows the seventh round of the MEM and the official publication of Jamaica’s National Evaluation Report on Drug Policies, hosted by the Government of Jamaica in partnership with Organisation of American States (OAS) Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), yesterday (October 25), at the Jamaica Pegasus, in Kingston.

With the aid of the OAS, the Ministry of National Security (MNS) established five drug courts, placed cannabis use into a legal framework, relaunched the Jamaica Drug Information Network, expanded the Jamaica Constabulary Force’s (JCF) Canine Division for greater narcotic drug detection, improved border control via the acquisition of patrol boats and airplanes and launched a National Early Warning System (EWS).

The OAS Representative to Jamaica, Jeanelle van GlaanenWeygel, says “the drug problem in the Americas remains an increasingly complex, dynamic and multi-causal phenomenon that has adverse effects on health, social cohesion and citizen security”.

The GOJ acknowledges that drug trafficking is a threat to national security and public health, which requires an active response, as well as strengthened local, regional and international partnerships. Chief Technical Director at the MNS, Rohan Richards, says “the Government has made it a priority to strengthen its counter-drug responses by placing greater emphasis on a balanced approach to drug control”. He urges local stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the National Evaluation Report, which informs strategies that combat illicit drug trade.

Last year, 849 persons were arrested for drugs at air and sea ports. The Jamaica Constabulary Force Narcotics Division also reported seizures of 109 kilograms of cocaine, 23,762 kilograms of dried marijuana, 106 kilograms hashish oil and 209 kilograms of cannabis plants.

MEM is a peer review process that measures the progress of action taken by OAS member states in implementing the CICAD Hemispheric Drug Strategy's Plan of Action on Drugs to address the world drug problem and related crimes. It is the only multilateral evaluation of its kind in the world.