



**PRESS RELEASE
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Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security and Peace, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, addresses the delegates of the 17th Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas in Cusco, Peru, on Wednesday (July 8), on behalf of the Prime Minister of Jamaica and Minister of Defence, Dr. the Most Hon. Andrew Holness.

Government of Jamaica calls for stronger regional cooperation at the 17th Conference of Defence Ministers

The Government of Jamaica has called for deeper regional cooperation to combat transnational crime and build greater security resilience across the Americas.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security and Peace, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, said the evolving global security landscape requires countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to work more closely together. He was speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister of Jamaica and Minister of Defence, Dr. the Most Hon. Andrew Holness.

“Security partnerships are evolving and international dynamics are shifting. In response, nations across Latin America and the Caribbean must strengthen collective security arrangements and build greater regional self-reliance,” Minister Chang noted while addressing the delegates at the 17th Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas (CDMA) in Cusco, Peru on Wednesday (July 8).

The Security Minister pointed out that, **“transnational criminal organisations are evolving. They exploit porous borders to traffic narcotics, illegal firearms, and persons, while facilitating money laundering and other forms of organised crime.”**



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In response to the shared regional issues, Minister Chang urged the delegates to take action by strengthening intelligence sharing, expanding joint military training and operational exercises, promoting technical exchanges and developing stronger legal frameworks to improve the prosecution of transnational criminal actors.

He also added that Jamaica remains committed to strengthening regional security and defence capabilities.

“In recent years, the Jamaica Defence Force has modernised and expanded its maritime fleet with the acquisition of offshore patrol vessels. These vessels have strengthened our ability to secure Jamaica’s territorial waters, support regional anti-trafficking and counter-narcotics operations, search-and-rescue missions across the Caribbean and Exclusive Economic Zone,” Minister Chang noted.

Additionally, in addressing the issue of climate change on regional security, Minister Chang expressed Jamaica’s readiness to support the relief and recovery efforts in Venezuela following the recent devastating earthquakes and encourage member states to support ongoing humanitarian response.

“Our collective strength is measured not only by how we confront shared security threats, but by how we stand with each other in times of tragedy,” he told the delegates.

He also pointed out that the regional discussions would not have been complete without addressing the ongoing issues in Haiti. Minister Chang said Jamaica continues to engage in diplomatic and security coordination efforts as a member of the Standing Group of Partners supporting Haiti.

He said Jamaica remains committed to helping restore peace, stability and democratic governance in Haiti and encouraged continued regional and international support for the country’s recovery.

In his closing remarks, Minister Chang expressed confidence that the discussions at the conference will produce tangible outcomes through the practical implementation of the Cusco Declaration.

The Cusco Declaration is a two-page document signed by 12 South American countries in 2004, to announce the foundation of the Union of South American Nations, establish a regional parliament, a common market and a common currency.