



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Government targeting youth through Social Intervention – Minister Chang

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang says the Government of Jamaica (GoJ) is seeking to reduce the involvement of youth in criminal activities by streamlining social intervention programmes.

Minister Chang made the announcement during the launch of the United States Agency International Development's (USAID) Local Partner Development (LPD) Core Partners Youth Crime and Violence Prevention Programme at the Terra Nova Hotel yesterday (Thursday, November 19, 2020).

“Jamaica continues to boasts a relatively young population. However, a matter of significant concern and urgency for the government is the high level of youth ages 12-14, who enter into conflict with the law,” he said.

Minister Chang added that among the youth cohort involved in crime, young men represented the majority. **“As at two days ago, there were 199 youth offenders across the four juvenile correctional centres. Of this number, 137 were boys and 62 were girls. Equally concerning, as of September 30, 2020, there were 778 young people serving non-custodial probation orders of which 678 or 85 per cent were boys.”**

The Government of Jamaica is seeking to reduce the involvement of youth in crime by taking an all-of-Government approach, including strengthening public institutions and streamlining social intervention initiatives that will result in improved community-specific, relevant, and transformative programmes.

Minister Chang highlighted that so far the Government has developed and expanded Human Capital and Social Development Programmes that target at-risk youth. The programmes include the Housing, Opportunity, Production and Employment (H.O.P.E) Programme; the National Youth Service Corps; and the Heart National Service and Training Agency Trust.

Meanwhile, Chargé d' Affaires of the United States Embassy, John McIntyre, during his address at the programme launch said the United States of America is committed to helping the Government of Jamaica achieve the National Development Goals under Vision 2030.

He added that the Local Partner Development (LPD) Core Partners Youth Crime and Violence Prevention Programme launched by USAID includes partners such as the MultiCare Youth Foundation (MYF), Peace Management Initiative (PMI) and Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA). **“Our support remains steadfast in Jamaica and throughout the Caribbean, this will not change. I will like to wish these partners every success in charting a new course that gives youth in this country the opportunity to live productive and meaningful lives**



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away from crime and violence, these young people have the potential to positively contribute to the growth and development of Jamaica,” said Mr. McIntyre.

The Local Partner Development (LPD) is a six-year activity that is funded by USAID through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative and implemented by FHI 360. LPD’s realigned vision of success is that Jamaican institutions will become more effective in advancing collaborative, evidence-based youth crime and violence prevention strategies and its civil society organizations and key public and private sector partners will be better able to mobilize and sustain targeted and effective secondary and tertiary prevention. This vision will be carried out through LPD’s work under its three component.

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