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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr Horace Chang, says the Jamaica Constabulary Force is the only public entity that is on a path to full digitization. He made the statement during his 2023 Sectoral Presentation in Parliament today under the theme: "Technology - Transforming the Force for Good, Securing a Nation". Minister of State for National Security, the Hon. Zavia Mayne looks on attentively.

We will win this war (against crime, violence and public disorder) – Minister Chang

Crime is Jamaica's greatest concern, as it undermines democracy, corrupts institutions, and generates social disorder and lawlessness, posits Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr Horace Chang.

He stated that the government did not just talk about the issue but has **“made it the priority”** area for direct attention by the government.

Under the theme: **“Technology – Transforming the Force for Good, Securing a Nation”**, Minister Chang told Parliament during his Sectoral Presentation earlier today (April 25), the government has invested and will continue to invest in the national security architecture to finally rid Jamaica of the high levels of crime.

“We are recruiting. We are transforming. We are modernizing. We are building. We are developing the most powerful Force for Good – the Jamaica Constabulary Force,” declares Dr Chang.

In addition, he said the government has expanded and strengthened the Jamaica Defence Force and institutionalized the Major Organized Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency (MOCA).

“We have a strong Financial Investigations Division (FID). We have an active Contraband Enforcement Team (CET) – note the firearm seizures at the Montego Bay port and we have PICA. These operate as one team prosecuting criminals and protecting the families of this country,” Minister Chang stated.

Murder, he said, is the most emotionally traumatic and devastating criminal act, suggesting that to cauterize it, we must fight on all fronts - fraud, corruption, gangs, guns, drugs, scamming, indiscipline and disorder.

Over the last 25 years, the country has been grappling with one of the highest murder rates in the region, and at the same time, low levels of investment in our national security. This is a reminder of the failure of past administrations not prioritizing this critical issue, Minister Chang stressed.

Consequently, as part of **Plan Secure Jamaica**, the government will continue to increase police recruitment. The JCF now trains some 1,260 recruits annually from expanded training facilities, resulting in a net addition of about 800 police officers.

The Security Minister noted the upgrade of the police P25 Radio Communication Network

(the expanded network connectivity across police facilities island-wide to complete the digitization process), an expanded police fleet of fit-for-purpose motor vehicles that are equipped with computers, cameras and a full fleet management system for the first time in the history of the Force.

Further highlighting the gains, Minister Chang pointed to the ongoing construction of the Forensic Pathology Autopsy Suite which will be completed this year; this is a major win for the Institute of Forensic Science and Legal Medicine (IFSLM), the finest in the region.

Six (6) fit-for-purpose police stations have been constructed, namely Shady Grove, Olympic Gardens, Buff Bay, Port Antonio, Mount Salem and Green Acres, which will be ready for occupation later this year, while another six (6) police stations have been extensively renovated and retrofitted into professional institutions at Franklyn Town, Adelphi, Four Paths, Denham Town, Bog Walk and Lionel Town.

“Although crime remains a serious issue for Jamaicans, crime victimization and feelings of insecurity have been significantly reduced since 2019,” the Minister said.

He was pointing to a report from the 2021 Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) which indicated a crime victimization rate of seven (7) per cent for Jamaica, with only eighteen (18) per cent of the population feeling insecure in their communities.