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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Photo caption: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang (Centre), Minister without Portfolio in the Office of the Prime Minister, Dr. Dana Morris Dixon (right) and Director of Public Prosecutions, Paula Llewelyn (left) engage in a discussion at the Opening Ceremony of the 11th EDF - IMPACS Jamaica Cyber Awareness Sensitization & Training at the Pegasus Hotel in Kingston on Tuesday, June 27, 2023.

**Government employing mitigation efforts to protect Jamaica’s cyberinfrastructure –
Minister Chang**

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang, says the Government of Jamaica is committed to mitigating the threats of cybercrime and has made significant investments in the protection of the nation’s cyber infrastructure.

The Security Minister, who delivered the keynote address at the Opening Ceremony for the 11th European Development Fund/IMPACS Jamaica Cyber Awareness Sensitization and Training Session at the Pegasus Hotel in Kingston, also pointed out that rapid advancement in technology, CARICOM-wide, is not without consequences.

“This rapid adoption of technology has left many vulnerable to the ills of cyberspace and this has been further compounded by the limited knowledge of how to operate safely within cyberspace,” he said.

At the same time, Minister Chang stated that through the National Broadband Initiative, Jamaica is on target to provide Last Mile connectivity across the island by 2025.

He said that special emphasis is being placed on underserved and remote areas and that through the Universal Service Fund (USF), there have been increased free public Wi-Fi hotspots and internet access across major townships and communities.

Minister Chang added: **“Our main security agencies, the Jamaica Constabulary Force, The Jamaica Customs Agency, and the Passport Immigration and Citizenship Agency, have all made tremendous strides in digitizing their operations. All of these initiatives are making Jamaica a safer digital society”**.

According to the Security Minister, increased online presence and widespread use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), have exponentially increased the risk of cyber-attacks locally; **“the consequences of which are far-reaching and multi-dimensional, impacting various aspects of the Jamaican society”**.

Jamaica registered eighty-six (86) cyber incidents in 2022 and a further sixty (60) incidents so far recorded in 2023. Affected sectors include education, finance, health, tourism and security.

The affected entities are victims of, inter alia, phishing attacks, unauthorized access and denial of service (DoS) attacks. Two recent incidents of note were the breach of the GOJ’s JamaicaEye website and the attack on at least one financial institution earlier this month.

Minister Chang said that given the high level of underreporting, this minutely demonstrates the extent of cybercrimes and the types of threats that exist locally.

Indicative of the Government’s thrust to strengthen the cyber security infrastructure, a commitment was made during the 2023 budget presentation, to increase the allocation of the Jamaica Cyber Incident Response Team (JaCIRT) by JM\$20 million.

The JaCIRT was established to deliver on the mandate outlined in the Government of Jamaica National Cyber Security Strategy of 2015 and continues to lead the government in addressing matters regarding cyber threats by identifying, analysing and evaluating cyber threats and trends.

Minister Chang stated that as Jamaica embraces the benefits of technology, the country must continue to confront the challenges posed by cyber threats.

“This means enhancing cyber resilience by promoting cyber awareness and collaboration are essential in safeguarding the nation and by extension the region’s cyber infrastructure,” the Minister said.