



**PRESS RELEASE  
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**Tuesday, September 26, 2023**



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang converses with Anne Milgram (left), Drug Enforcement Administration and Co-President of the International Drug Enforcement Conference XXVII on Tuesday, September 19 at the 37th staging of the International Drug Enforcement Conference at the Montego Bay Convention Centre in Rose Hall, St. James. Looking on are Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security, the Hon. Juliet Cuthbert-Flynn (2nd right), Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Security, Ambassador Alison Stone Roofe (2nd left) and Drug Enforcement Administration Caribbean Division Special Agent in Charge, Denise Foster (1st right).

**Illicit drug trade requires strong, comprehensive transnational response – Minister Chang**

The ever-changing nature of the illicit drug trade requires a comprehensive, balanced, multidisciplinary, transnational and evidence-based response, declares Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Horace Chang.

He was speaking at the Opening Ceremony of the 37<sup>th</sup> International Drug Enforcement Conference (IDEC), held last week at the Montego Bay Convention Centre in Rose Hall, St James.

Noting the geographical location of Jamaica in particular and the Caribbean region generally as an established route for the shipment of narcotics and illegal firearms, Minister Chang pointed out that the trafficking of narcotics constitutes a clear and present danger and an imminent threat to the rule of law and public safety of all of the countries represented at the Conference.

**“Together with our regional and hemispheric partners, we continue to advance efforts to combat the illicit drug trade and other forms of transnational crimes that plague our region,”** the Security Minister said.

**“These illicit activities continue to negatively impact Jamaica’s public health, public safety and the general well-being of our citizens. They also undermine the effectiveness of the country’s justice systems, threaten political, social and economic stability and erode the confidence of our citizens in our democratic institutions,”** he added.

Additionally, Minister Chang described the link between the illicit drugs trade and the illicit firearms trade as a major challenge for the region.

He said that both activities are inextricably linked and utilize the same trafficking patterns and networks, which have stimulated an increased demand for illegal guns by transnational organized criminal networks who are seeking to protect their illicit activities.

**“As a result, over the last four years, the Government of Jamaica has undertaken a more robust and targeted approach to combatting illicit guns and drugs,”** Minister Chang said, adding that the hardline taken on illegal guns and drugs, is reflected in the *Firearms (Prohibition, Restriction and Regulation) Act, 2022*; major amendments to the *Proceeds of Crime Act in 2019* and the expanded focus of the Jamaica Customs Agency in securing the country’s borders.

Minister Chang while lauding the Conference, said it provided an opportunity to engender a spirit of cooperation among law enforcement officials from all over the world in the ongoing fight against trafficking of illegal guns and drugs.

The 37<sup>th</sup> IDEC was co-hosted by the Government of Jamaica in collaboration with the Government of the United States of America and is held every year on a different continent. More than 900 delegates representing 139 countries attended the three-day Conference to discuss and collaborate on issues related to drug enforcement and the global drug trade.