

**Message by**  
**Hon. Peter Bunting, M.P., Minister of National Security**  
**For Drug Awareness Month 2012**  
*“Mek wi protect wi youths from Substance Abuse”.*

The Ministry of National Security is pleased to be associated with this month’s series of activities on drug awareness. As we proudly celebrate fifty years of Jamaica’s independence and our successes as a nation, we must strive to limit our youth’s access to drugs and other harmful substances, thereby preserving Jamaica’s next fifty.

Research has shown that the number of youth experimenting with drugs is rising at a significant rate, with users starting at an increasingly younger age. According to the 2010 National Council on Drug Abuse Global School-Based Student Health Survey, 80.2 percent of youth, 13-15 years, used alcohol before age 14, and 79.9 percent of the same age group used drugs. The situation is compounded by the fact that youth access to harmful substances has increased over the last four years.

The Ministry of National Security takes very seriously, its responsibility to control the supply and trafficking of narcotics and other harmful substances, thereby limiting access to our youth. The police have been especially integral in managing the illegal production of drugs, and continue to partner with entertainment providers to limit underage drinking. The flagship social intervention initiative of the Ministry of National Security, the Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP), further strengthens this thrust by offering substance abuse counseling and education services in over 50 at-risk communities across Jamaica.

The work of the National Council on Drug Abuse (NCDA) is key to mitigating the risk of early substance abuse, and complements our mission to preserve the security of our citizenry. The Ministry of National Security commends the NCDA for its sustained efforts in keeping our youth healthy and drug-free. We join the Council in celebrating this year's Drug Awareness Month. Our collective efforts are key to building healthy and safe communities across the country.

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