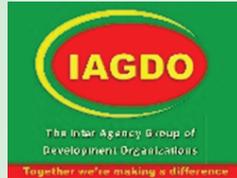


Conference of Churches in Grenada
and
The Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations



REPORT

NATIONAL ROUND TABLE
on

The CARICOM Commission on Marijuana Report 2018

Grenada Trade Centre Annex

Friday, 22nd January, 2021; 8.30 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.



11th EDF Programme
Support to the Non State Actors Panel

**Conference of Churches in Grenada
and
The Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations**



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11th EDF Support to Non State Actors

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Conference of Churches in Grenada (CCG) and the Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations (IAGDO), in collaboration with the Non State Actors Panel, hosted a National Round Table on the **CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana Report 2018** on Friday, January 22nd, 2021. Due to COVID-19 measures, the onsite attendance was restricted to 25 persons. Persons had the option of participating via Zoom or the Facebook platform *Mek We Chat*¹ which was followed by over one thousand persons. Prominent among the onsite participants were members of the Rastafarian community.

1. Context

The National Round Table was undertaken in the context of announcements that the Government of Grenada would be undertaking public consultations on the decriminalization of marijuana. The Report which had been launched since 2018 had never been presented to the public. Thus, the National Round Table was intended to provide a platform to:-

- Present the findings and recommendations of the *Report of the Regional CARICOM Commission on Marijuana 2018*.
- Invite feedback/responses from key stakeholders and experts on the various aspects of the Report
- Invite feedback from other stakeholders attending the Round Table
- Identify the key issues and concerns from the stakeholders in respect of the recommendations of the Commission.

The National Round Table featured:-

- Remarks by Hon. Peter David, Minister of Agriculture;
- The presentation of the Commission's Report via Zoom platform, by Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Chair of the CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana;
- Three panel discussions on the Report which featured 10-12 minute responses from a diverse group of professionals. Each panel concluded with a plenary session which accommodated questions, comments and recommendations from the onsite and virtual audience
- The themes of the panels were:-
 - Health and Social Implications including Children and Youth
 - Economics of Health Care and Marijuana Usage; the Economic Potential of Marijuana
 - Decriminalization, Legalization, Law Enforcement and Human Rights

2. Remarks by Minister of Agriculture

In his remarks, Hon. Peter David, Minister of Agriculture, thanked the hosts, IAGDO and the CCG, for organizing the National Round Table and inviting his participation, noting that it would assist the government greatly in respect of the announced consultations. He praised the *excellent work* of the Commission and its Commissioners and *the excellent document* which provided a road map for Caribbean governments and people re the Way Forward. He advised that the Government of Grenada had accepted the report of the Commission and would be bringing legislation, in keeping with the recommendations of

¹ Part I - <https://www.facebook.com/mekwechat/videos/766878283917871>
 Part II - <https://www.facebook.com/mekwechat/videos/701566794061469>

the Report, before the people and stakeholders. Min. David further advised that he “looked forward with anxiety” to the report of the National Round Table, noting that the results of the discussions of the Round Table would influence the position of the government.

3. Presentation of the Report of the CARICOM Commission on Marijuana

In her presentation, Professor Antoine addressed the rationale for the establishment of the Commission, its findings and recommendations.

Across CARICOM, the existing legal regime criminalized the use and possession of marijuana. The Heads of Government recognized the need for law reform in this regard. They therefore set up the CARICOM Commission in 2014 to be an independent body to depoliticize the issue and guide the way forward. The Commission undertook its own research including the conduct of polls, commissioned a report on the economic potential of marijuana/cannabis, and concluded its work by “listening to the people of the region” through a series of consultations across the CARICOM Member States. The consultations comprised of town hall meetings and focus groups discussions with specific groups of stakeholders.

A review of the data showed that people from poor and marginalized communities were disproportionately arrested and incarcerated for the use and possession of marijuana because they were unable to pay the hefty fines associated with penalties. In the consultations across the region, citizens shared their stories of trauma - as a result of the enforcement of the legal regime pertaining to marijuana. Persons, including seniors and persons with disabilities, were unable to access cheaper, more effective medicinal marijuana, and if they did, also ran the risks of arrests and incarceration. Members of the Rastafarian faith, for whom marijuana was part of their religious sacrament, were persecuted and brutalized for their use and possession of marijuana. Young men, incarcerated for marijuana, ended up with a criminal record which marred their future prospects of advancement. It was also noted that the prohibitionist, legal regime had failed to prevent access to marijuana by children. People from all walks of life expressed the view that people should not be in jail for using marijuana. At the very least, the use of marijuana should be decriminalized.

The Commission concluded that “*there were deep rationales for law reform of the prohibitionist legal regime*”, describing it as *harmful, ineffective and unjust*. The justification for new laws was supported by strong public opinion and credible scientific and empirical data analysis. All members of the Commission supported decriminalization of marijuana in the short term and long term legalization but with reservations about the readiness of Member States and the timing of full legalization. Full legalization should be within the context of each Member State’s reality.

The Commission proposed the following:-

- **Dismantle Prohibition:** The end goal should be the dismantling of the prohibition regime in its totality, replacing it with a strictly regulated framework similar to that in place for alcohol and tobacco which are harmful substances but not criminalized.

- **Change the Status Quo/Decriminalization:** The status quo should not be maintained. The bottom line should be decriminalization. People should not be put in jail for the use of marijuana
- **Responsible Control Regime:** A responsible control regime was required, dictating the conditions under which marijuana was to be sold.
- **Education and Young People:** Education should be prioritized, particularly targeting young people. The change of the legal framework should not create a glamour industry. People, particularly young people should not feel that it was a “free up” legal environment. Unless prescribed for medicinal purposes, it was not recommended that it be used by persons under the age of 21 years.
- **Public Health/Social Justice Approach:** The legal regime for marijuana should be based on social justice and human rights considerations - the right to health and protection from discrimination.
- **Banned from Public Spaces:** For the time being, cannabis should be banned from all public spaces
- **Special Provisions re Rastafarian Community:** Special provisions should be made for the Rastafarian community re their use of marijuana as a religious sacrament.

Professor Antoine commented that during the conduct of its work, social justice issues were prominent on the agenda. Observing that interest in medical marijuana industry was increasing across the region, Professor Antoine emphasized that these interests must not overtake social justice considerations. Social justice must remain the priority.

She also observed that while medical marijuana was a lucrative billion dollar industry which would benefit from the legalization of marijuana, the interests of the traditional, small growers –once considered criminals – must be protected. In Jamaica, foreign, big companies had pushed out the traditional, small farmers. Professor Antoine cautioned about repeating mistakes of the past - selling out to big, international interests, just producing raw material and, in the end, really gaining nothing.

4. Health Panel:

The following were the key points emerging from the health panel:

- **Designation of Dangerous Drug:** The designation of marijuana as dangerous drug was a Eurocentric view imposed by a colonial power on the Caribbean.
- **Negative Perception:** Notwithstanding the region’s long history of marijuana use- associated with many religious, ethnic and cultural traditions, this negative perception of marijuana was internalized by the people of the region through the legal regime which criminalized and stigmatized marijuana, reinforced by the church and the education system, key institutions of socialization.
- **Social Problems:** This criminal designation and imposed law can be credited for the social problems that have emerged as the region’s people were stripped of their rights to practice their religion and their rituals.
- **Change in Attitudes:** Change is inevitable. There is a change in perception and growing support throughout the region, including Grenada, for the decriminalization of marijuana. This change in perception and attitude may be due to a number of social factors including the availability of scientific evidence which shows that marijuana has many benefits and is no more harmful than substances such as alcohol.

- **Recommendations of the Panel:** The following recommendations were made by the various members of the panel:-
 - **Education:** There should be an extensive education programme on the benefits and risks of using marijuana.
 - **Decriminalization:** Marijuana should be decriminalized.
 - **Protect Children:** Legislation should be instituted to protect children.
 - **Therapeutic Response and Competent Care:** Those who experienced adverse consequences as a result of smoking should have access to quality health care that can be accessed without barriers and the stigma of being treated for an illegal substance.
 - **Strengthening Health Care Services:** Actions should be taken in respect of strengthening health care services - health promotion and prevention; early screening, identification and treatment of people who have problems.
- **Public Health and Human Rights Approach:** The Commission’s Report emphasized a public health and human rights approach to marijuana. A public health approach is about the reduction of inequities.
 - **Available to Anyone and Everyone:** Whatever is available to anyone must be available to everyone without any out-of-pocket expenses.
 - **Participation in Decision-making:** Communities must be empowered to participate in decision making and to provide feedback on the health services that they receive.
 - **Equity re Community Access to Health Services:** There must be provisions for equitable access by all communities, notwithstanding their geographical location.

5. Economic Panel

5.1. Social Costs

The legal regime which treated marijuana as a dangerous drug created significant social costs for the country and life implications for persons who acquire criminal records as a result of being arrested and/or charged for use/possession of small amounts of marijuana. Decriminalization was the means of addressing the immediate and priority issue of the social costs to the country.

5.2. Realizing Economic Potential

The economic study undertaken on behalf of the Commission noted the lucrative economic potential of the marijuana industry. It was now classified as a commodity. In the context of the Caribbean/Grenada, the panel identified the following key challenges to be addressed:-

- **Commodity:** As an agricultural commodity, it would face the same challenges faced by commodities such as cocoa and nutmeg.
- **Protecting the Interests of Traditional Growers:** How would the interests of traditional, small growers, formerly criminalized, be protected in the face of competition from big, foreign companies?
- **Banking Challenges:** The Caribbean was connected to an international finance system it did not control. How could the Caribbean overcome the banking challenges? The Caribbean was subject to financial regulations by the Financial Action Task Force which still considered revenues from transactions in marijuana as “proceeds of crime”. Even in the USA and Canada where there were flourishing marijuana businesses, banking services were not available to these businesses.

- **Glut:** There was already overproduction in the commodity market.
- **Barriers to Entry:** There were technical and non-technical barriers to entry into international markets.

Among the recommendations from members of the panel were the following:-

- **Legalization with a Regulated Market:** The market should not be open and free to all because of the downsides/negative consequences particularly the health considerations with respect to children, youth and individuals with adverse reactions. The legal regime must be supported by a regulatory body with adequate infrastructure and services.
- **Licences:** Lessons could be learned from the St. Vincent and the Grenadines whose legal regime “grand fathered” their traditional growers and granted them vertically integrated licence permitting them to produce, manufacture, distribute, dispense at the retail level.
- **Producer Associations:** Small growers should form producers associations to facilitate trade and protect their interests.
- **Branding/Differentiation and Value Added:** The region must consider its entry into the market, with value added products and focus on niche markets. Products have to be differentiated and branded. This must be supported by ongoing product and market research.
- **Community Tourism:** Link marijuana with the community tourism sector.
- **Caution/Phased Approach:** Notwithstanding the lucrative, economic potential, it was imperative that the development of the marijuana industry be approached cautiously and diligently. Several elements had to be put in place. There should be a step-by-step phased approach. Cautioning against over optimism, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, had observed, *there is no “pot of gold at the end of the marijuana rainbow”*.²

6. Decriminalization, Legalization, Law and Human Rights

The following was noted:-

- **Support for Decriminalization:** The Commission’s Report revealed that in Grenada, there was majority support for decriminalization - 61 percent based on a poll conducted in 2018. Regional law enforcement also overwhelmingly supported decriminalization of marijuana, being of the view that there was no correlation between marijuana and crime, particularly violent crime and that poorer communities suffered more in terms of law enforcement. However, it was not that these communities used more drugs. Precedents have already been set so there are laws that Grenada could draw upon and tweak to give effect in Grenada.
- **Breaking the Cycle of Negative Impact:** Many lives have been lost and many young men incarcerated. The challenge was to break that cycle and find the path to better world for the current and future generations. There were various schools of thought on drugs and criminalization/legalization. One must look at both sides and all angles – policy, laws and enforcement. The issues must be analyzed and the best decision made.
- **Marijuana and Rastafarians:** Marijuana was used as a burnt sacrament in the Rastafarian faith for specific reasons. For many years, members of the Rastafarian community have been brutalized and marginalized for marijuana use. It was good that the people and government had become

² <https://searchlight.vc/searchlight/front-page/2018/05/15/pm-gonsalves-cautions-against-over-optimism-about-medicinal-marijuana-industry/>

conscious of the benefits of marijuana. Grenada should establish a marijuana industry and cease the arrests of Rastas and other persons for the use and possession of marijuana.

- **Education and Information:** There were many examples of the adverse consequences of the use of marijuana on young people. There should be conversations about marijuana. Both young and old needed information and education about the benefits and dangers of marijuana.

7. Plenary Sessions

The following were the issues and positions emerging from the plenary sessions:

- **Decriminalization/Urgency to Create Relief:** There was an urgency to create relief – to curb the arrest and criminalization of persons using and possessing small amounts. This could be achieved by decriminalization.
- **Supply in the Context of Decriminalization:** In the context of decriminalization of the use/possession of a minimal amount of marijuana, if persons were not growing their own plants, the issue of supply was still a “grey area”. If persons were not growing their own supply, then it came from illegal sources. In Jamaica, laws had been established in respect of supply.
- **Fear, Stigma and Mental Health:**
 - **Criminalization:** The criminalization of marijuana had created fear and stigma. Some people associated the use of marijuana with mental illness.
 - **Stigma and Access to Mental Health Services:** Mental illness was not directly linked to marijuana. Some persons posited that it was the stress associated with the illegal nature of marijuana which created problems. Thus people were unable/afraid to seek help when they needed it.
 - **Justifiable Health Concerns:** There were justifiable health concerns re use by children and adolescents and people who experience adverse consequences, some with just one use of marijuana.
- **Adequate Health Services:** Given that there could be increased usage, initially, if marijuana was decriminalized and given that there were some persons who just smoke once and have a negative experience, does Grenada have adequate facilities/expertise to deal with those who use it and have negative consequences?
- **Economic Potential:**
 - **Lack of Opportunity:** Since marijuana was illegal, there had not been any opportunity to explore and exploit its other uses besides smoking. A marijuana industry could be developed. Government needed to “open the door”.
 - **Marijuana and Tourism:** Marijuana was already linked to the tourism industry in Grenada. The stigma should be removed.
 - **Socio-ecological Impact:** A major concern was the socio-ecological impact of growing marijuana in large areas and the impact that this would have on both the livelihoods of growers and the on the land/environment.
 - **Farming System:** Marijuana could be grown in association with the other crops/herbs. All of the region’s herbs/nutraceuticals can be grown in this manner, complementing each other, reducing the need for artificial fertilizers and therefore reduce the negative environmental impact.

- **Seeds:** The origin of seeds was very important. Once marijuana was decriminalized/legalized, it should be ensured that corporations did not come in with their own seeds. They were seeking to patent their seeds. The small growers would not be able to withstand the impact.
- **Traditional Licence:** The traditional licence granted to small traditional marijuana farmers in St. Vincent and the Grenadines which enables them to create and sell products themselves, is a model that is protecting the interests of small farmers.
- **Ongoing Research:** Ongoing research is required to be aware of what is going on in the world and how the region/Grenada is positioned. The expectation of “big bucks” has not been realized in a number of countries which started off with these expectations.
- **Persecution of Rastas:** Rastafarians have experienced a lot of struggle on the issue of marijuana. They have been persecuted and brutalized. Marijuana should be considered part of Rastafari sacrament and that the persecution of Rastafarians must end.

8. Key Issues and Recommendations re Going Forward

Among the key observations, issues and recommendations emerging from the National Round Table were the following :-

- **People’s Issue:** The issue of legal reform regime of marijuana was a non-political, non-partisan issue. The presentation of the *Report of the CARICOM Commission* had set the right tone for a national discussion.
- **Direction:** The Commission’s Report was described as “comprehensive, richly evidence-based and balanced”. It gave direction as to how the CARICOM countries/Grenada should proceed in addressing the issue of reform of legal regime for marijuana:-
 - **Reform of Legal Framework for Marijuana:** The legal framework for marijuana should be addressed from a human rights and public health perspective.
 - **Social Justice Priorities:** Social justice was the focus of the Report and must remain the priority. The increasing interests in the medical ganja industry must not overshadow the social justice issue.
- **Extensive and Inclusive Discussions of the Report:** The Report should be disseminated widely. There was a need for extensive and inclusive discussions to ensure that everyone in society understood the information contained in the Report.
- **Underlying Theme of Social Justice/Legal Reform:** The theme of social justice must be central to the discussion and actions going forward. Going forward, legal reform must address the inequalities/injustices experienced by the most vulnerable in society over the years.
- **Transitioning Challenge:** Many persons want decriminalization. There were persons with real concerns based on life experiences. Their concerns should not be ignored.
- **Education and Information:** Education and knowledge about marijuana were required. Over decades, the negative perception of marijuana - a plant that historically held great spiritual, medicinal, cultural and social value to Caribbean people - was deliberately created by the legal regime which deemed it a *dangerous drug* complemented by the socializing influences of the church and the education system. Currently, there was a focus on the female plant which was smoked. However, there were several strains of marijuana with various properties and uses upon which industry could be founded to create economic well-being.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

a.k.a.	also known as
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCG	Conference of Churches in Grenada
CFATF	Caribbean Financial Action Task Force
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IAGDO	Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations
ILO	International Labour Organisation
OAS	Organisation of American States
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
SGU	St. George's University
THC	tetrahydrocannabinol
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
US	United States
USA	United States of America
UWI	University of the West Indies
WHO	World Health Organisation

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Friday, 22nd January, 2021; 8.30 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

The Conference of Churches in Grenada (CCG) and the Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations (IAGDO), in collaboration with the Non State Actors Panel, hosted a National Round Table on the **CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana Report 2018** on Friday, January 22nd, 2021.

1. Background/Context

The National Round Table was undertaken in the context of announcements by government officials - Prime Minister, Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell and Hon. Peter David, recently re-assigned to the Ministry of Agriculture - that Grenada would be undertaking consultations on the decriminalization of marijuana³. At a town hall meeting, Prime Minister Mitchell also advised that Government had “*established a committee locally to review the CARICOM Marijuana Commission Report that will guide the country to set the framework for moving forward with the recommendations*”.⁴

National consultations with the CARICOM Commission were not accommodated by Grenada in 2018 due to its imminent general elections. While the Commission’s Report was launched since July 2018, the Report had not been publicized in Grenada nor had discussion and engagement taken place in respect of the findings and recommendations of the report. It was within this context that Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations proposed a National Round Table as a contribution to dialogue and informed, inclusive discussions on the Report. The IAGDO approached the Conference of Churches in Grenada to partner on the initiative and also solicited the support of the Non State Actors Panel. A positive response was obtained from both entities.

1.1.Regional CARICOM Commission on Marijuana

1.1.1. Background to Establishment of Commission

At its 25th Intercessional Meeting, held in St. Vincent, March 10-11, 2014, the Heads of Government of CARICOM Member States “*mandated the establishment of a Commission to interrogate the issue of possible reform to the legal regimes regulating cannabis/marijuana in the CARICOM countries*”. In reaching this decision, the Heads of Government considered the following:-

³ <https://www.nowgrenada.com/2018/06/pm-mitchell-wants-grenada-to-reconsider-decriminalising-marijuana/>

⁴ <https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/11/grenada-to-develop-model-to-decriminalise-and-legalise-marijuana-use/>

- Thousands of young persons throughout the region had suffered incarceration for marijuana use and consumption.
- Many of these young persons, after their first experiences with the law, resolved to continue with crime as a way of life.
- There was deep resentment and non-co-operation with law enforcement because of inconsistent applications of the law.
- Traditionally, Caribbean citizens had promoted the use of medicinal properties of marijuana and these medicinal properties have been confirmed by emerging scientific evidence.
- Globally, other countries were undertaking legal reform in respect of use of marijuana for medicinal use.
- A regional approach would enhance the legitimacy of any policy reform approaches.

1.1.2. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the Commission were as follows:-

- i. Conduct a rigorous enquiry into the social, economic, health and legal issues surrounding marijuana use in the Caribbean and to determine whether there should be a change in the current drug classification of marijuana thereby making the drug more accessible for all types of usage (religious, recreational, medical and research); and
- ii. Recommend, if there is to be a re-classification, the legal and administrative conditions that should apply.

The Commission was also authorized and mandated to *“engage in an extensive consultation process with members of the Community and other key stakeholders at the national level to elicit the population’s view about the current usage and re-classification.”*

2. National Round Table

2.1.Purpose of the Round Table

The purpose of the National Round Table was **to contribute to the stakeholders’ knowledge and understanding of the findings and recommendations of the Report**, thereby initiating and contributing to informed engagement on the subject of decriminalization of marijuana. Stakeholders, including the general public, would be better able to make informed contributions during the intended public consultations announced by government officials. They could also be more proactive in initiating their own discussions and articulating informed positions.

The National Round Table was intended to provide a platform to:-

- **Present the findings and recommendations** of the Report of the Regional CARICOM Commission on Marijuana 2018.
- Invite **feedback/responses from key stakeholders and experts** on the various aspects of the Report

- **Invite feedback from other stakeholders** attending the Round Table
- **Identify the key issues and concerns from the stakeholders** in respect of the recommendations of the Commission.

2.2.Participants

- Originally, the National Round Table was intended to be a face-to-face engagement at a certified venue with the participation of a diverse range of stakeholders from government, civil society, secondary school students and the Rastafarian community for whom marijuana has religious significance. However, the COVID-19 spikes in late December and the preventative measures continuing into January placed significant constraints on the numbers that could be accommodated at any one site - only 25 persons. Therefore, last minute arrangements had to be made to host a virtual event.
- Invitations were issued to state and non state actors but targetted civil society groups in particular. Arrangements were made with *Island Media* to stream the event via one of its Facebook platforms in order to extend the participation in the Round Table.
- There were forty-three registered participants, on site and virtually, and an estimated one thousand followers via *Island Media's Mek We Chat* Facebook platform⁵ - reference Appendix 5.

2.3.National Round Table Methodology

The National Round Table was facilitated as follows:-

- **Presentation of the Commission's Report:** Via Zoom platform, Professor Rosemary Belle Antoine - Chair of the *CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana* – presented the findings and recommendations of the Commission's Report 2018.
- **Respondents/Discussants:** There were three moderated panels which facilitated 10-12 minute responses from a diverse group of professional competence and expertise and accommodated questions from the onsite and virtual audience. The themes of the panels were:-
 - **Health and Social Implications including Children and Youth**
 - **Economic Considerations:** Economics of Health Care and Marijuana Usage; the Economic Potential of Marijuana
 - **Decriminalization, Legalization, Law Enforcement and Human Rights**
- **Plenary Sessions:** A plenary session concluded each panel, permitting for a question and answer session as well as observations and recommendations from attendees/participants, on site and virtual.
- **Summary of "Take-Aways":** At the end of the morning and afternoon sessions, the key take-aways were presented by Dr. Stephen Fletcher and Mr. Lester Andall respectively.

⁵ Part I - <https://www.facebook.com/mekwechat/videos/766878283917871>
 Part II - <https://www.facebook.com/mekwechat/videos/701566794061469>

The day's agenda is annexed, Appendix 1 as well as guidelines for the conduct of the Round Table, Appendix 2.

2.4. Resource Persons

The following were the resource persons, respondents and moderators, of the presentation and various different panels:-

ACTIVITY	RESOURCE PERSONS
Presentation of <i>CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana Report 2018</i>	<p>Presenter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, <i>Chairperson of the CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana</i> <p>Moderator: Bishop Clyde Harvey, <i>Deputy Chairman, Conference of Churches in Grenada</i></p>
Response to Report: <i>Health, Children, Youth & Other Social Considerations</i>	<p>Respondents:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Wendy Crawford-Daniel, <i>Research Sociologist and Professor of Social Sciences at St. George's University</i> Dr. Omowale Amuleru-Marshall, <i>Professor Emeritus, St. George's University, Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine,</i> Dr. N. Prabhakar, <i>Psychiatrist; Lecturer, Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, St. George's University,</i> <p>Moderator: Ms. Cheryl Kirton, <i>Retired Educator and Human Resource Manager</i></p>
Response to Report: <i>Economic Considerations</i>	<p>Respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Stephen Fletcher: <i>Lead Consultant, Campeche International Consultants; Grenada's former Ambassador to the European Union</i> Mr. Kennedy Roberts: <i>Health Economist; Lecturer, Public Health Department, St. George's University</i> Dr. Patrick Antoine: <i>Economist; Grenada's Former Ambassador to CARICOM</i> <p>Moderator: Mr. Lester Andall: <i>a retired banker; a former President of the Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce.</i></p>
Response to Report: <i>Decriminalization, Legalization, Law and Human Rights</i>	<p>Respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Richie Maitland: <i>Grenadian attorney; specialization in Human Rights.</i> Mr. James Clarkson: <i>A retired Commissioner of Police; former National Point of Contact to the InterAmerican Committee against Terrorism</i> Elder Ras Nang Nang: <i>high priest, elder, Rastafarian faith</i> Ms. Glenda Mason-Francis: <i>retired educator</i> <p>Moderator: Retired Justice Rita Joseph: <i>retired judge of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court.</i></p>

Biographical notes of the resource persons are appended; reference Appendix 3.

2.5. Marijuana/Cannabis/Ganja

Throughout the proceedings of the National Round Table the names *marijuana*, *cannabis* and *ganja* was used interchangeably. This report will follow that pattern. Use of a specific name will reflect the name(s) used by the individual presenter or other participants. It was noted by Professor Antoine that the term marijuana had negative connotations given the legal regime and some persons favoured the term cannabis⁶.

3. Opening Session

The National Round Table began at around 9.00 a.m. and was presided over by Bishop Clyde Harvey, Deputy President of the Conference of Churches in Grenada, who welcomed persons to the National Round Table and did the invocation.

3.1. Welcome Remarks, Rev. Sylbert Prescod, Chairman, CCG:

Rev. Sylbert Prescod, Chairman of the Conference of Churches in Grenada welcomed all to the National Round Table, those physically present and those participating virtually. He noted the following:-

- Currently, the marijuana/cannabis was one of the many issues on the agenda of national, regional and global conversations. In the 1960s/70s, scientific research brought to the fore the medicinal values of marijuana. Many countries in Europe and states in the USA had begun to advocate for the reform of laws pertaining to the use of marijuana – from decriminalization to the legalization of marijuana for recreational and medicinal use.
- Two of Jamaica’s reggae legends, Bob Marley and Peter Tosh, were well-known advocates for the legalization of marijuana. Bob Marley made biblical reference, linking the use of marijuana to the use of the “leaf of tree which will bring healing”. Peter Tosh advocated for the legalization of marijuana in his song “*Legalize It*”
- In 2014, the Heads of Government of CARICOM set up the Regional Commission on Marijuana to explore and advise on the reform of the marijuana laws in the region, thus placing legal reform on CARICOM’s priority agenda.
- The Conference of Churches in Grenada and the Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations had come together, as responsible social partners, to provide a platform to facilitate the presentation of the Commission’s report and lay the basis for informed discussion and debate on the subject of the reform of the legislation.

3.2. Remarks by Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Peter David

Hon. Peter David thanked the hosts, IAGDO and the CCG, for organizing the National Round Table and inviting his participation. He also offered thanks on behalf of the Government of Grenada, noting that the National Round Table would assist the government greatly in respect of the announced consultations. He commended CARICOM for bringing the region together on the

⁶ Cannabis is the first part of the scientific name, denoting the plant family, *Cannabaceae*, to which marijuana belongs

important issue of legal reform in respect of the laws on marijuana and praised the “excellent work” of the Commission and the Commissioners and their “excellent document”. Hon. David offered the following observations on the Commission’s report:-

- **Road Map:** The report was an excellent document which provided a road map for Caribbean governments and people re the *Way Forward*.
- **Draconian Criminal Penalties:** Given his twenty plus years of experience as a lawyer, practicing criminal law in Grenada, he had come face to face with what the Commission described as “a legal regime characterized by draconian criminal penalties”.
- **Lacking in Legitimacy:** The report provided him with the basis on which to support positions that he had instinctively held. The legal regime lacked legitimacy. He agreed with the conclusion of the Commission that the legal regime was:- *ineffective, discriminatory, deeply unjust and violative of rights*” and “*lacking in legitimacy*”.
- **Status Quo Must Change:** The report reflected the position of the majority of the people of the region – the status quo in respect of marijuana must change. An increasing number of persons in the region were supportive of change. Min. David noted that among the persons supporting that change was Grenada’s own Rt. Hon. Prime Minister who had initially opposed change.
- **Drivers for Change:** Hon. David further noted that among the drivers for change were:-
 - **Recognition of the negative impact on young persons:** E.g. a criminal record as a result of the criminalization of possession of a small amount of marijuana. As a result, these young persons were unable to obtain visas to facilitate travel abroad for study. He recalled that some years ago, when he had piloted the *Rehabilitation of Young Offenders Bill*, the intention had been to expunge the criminal record of young offenders.
 - **Resources spent on Law Enforcement:** Government was spending significant resources in respect of law enforcement addressing the marijuana issue. Those resources could be better spent addressing other national needs and priorities.
- **Report Accepted by Government:** The Government of Grenada had accepted the report of the Commission and would move forward to effect change and to undertake consultations.
- **Use by Youth and Children:** Min. David noted that the report had expressed reservations about the effect of marijuana use on children and the effect of driving under the influence of marijuana.
- **Concensus on Decriminalization:** There is already concensus on decriminalization with respect to the following:-
 - **Possession for Personal Use:** Decriminalizing the possession and use of certain small amounts of marijuana for personal use.
 - **Cultivation of Small Amounts for Personal Use:** Decriminalization of the cultivation of a limited number of plants for personal use.

- **Rastafarian Sacrament:** Use of marijuana as a sacrament by the Rastafarian community
- **Economic Potential of Marijuana:** Min. David commended the report for spending time on the longer term issue of the cultivation of marijuana for development of its economic potential, including development of a medical marijuana sector.
- **History of Prohibition:** Min. David noted that, through the information provided by the Report, he had become aware of the history of the prohibition of marijuana use. It was declared a “dangerous drug” for “illegal reasons”. As a parent and grandparent, he was happy to have lived to see the use of marijuana being discussed.
- **No Longer a Dangerous Drug:** Marijuana can no longer be described as a “dangerous drug”. However, the Caribbean region was lagging behind in respect of the reform of its laws pertaining to marijuana.
- **Recommendations of the Commission:** The Commission recommended dismantling prohibition in its totality, to be replaced by a regulated framework similar to what exists for alcohol and tobacco. The Commission also recognized that law reform can take many forms and must conform to the national reality.
- **Grenada to Bring Legislation:** The government of Grenada would be bringing legislation, in keeping with the recommendations of the Report, before the people and stakeholders,

Min. David concluded his remarks by advising that he “looked forward with anxiety” to the report of the National Round Table, noting that the results of the discussions of the Round Table would influence the position of the government.

4. The CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana Report 2018, Professor Rose-Marie Antoine, Chairperson via Zoom

Professor Antoine advised that, in spite of the adverse conditions under which she was presenting, she was pleased to be doing this presentation “for Grenada”, honouring her mother’s heritage. Based on the remarks of Min. David, she was also pleased that Grenada had changed its position in respect of marijuana.

4.1. The CARICOM Commission

Professor Antoine gave a brief background to the CARICOM Commission. Given the controversial nature of the subject of reform of the laws in regards to marijuana and the political overtones, the *CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana* was set up by the Heads of Government to be an independent body to depoliticize the issue and guide the way forward. It was a multi-disciplinary team comprised of persons from across the region.

4.2. Commission's Consultations

In addition to undertaking its own research, the Commission listened to the people through its series of consultations across the region and its meetings with smaller, stakeholder groups. Professor Antoine described the experience as *enriching, rewarding, even moving*, during which she “learnt so much” from her fellow CARICOM citizens. She shared that, while at the beginning of the process, her position was neutral, even anti-marijuana, by the end of the consultations, she was of the firm, personal conviction that there must not only be decriminalization but, in the longer term, legalization of marijuana. However, this change, would not happen at the same rate in each country.

4.2.1. Call for Changes to Legal Regime

From the feedback of the persons attending the consultations, as well as the polling conducted by the Commission, it was clear that the vast majority of the people of the region, favoured a change in the laws regarding marijuana, though not for the same reasons. People from many walks of life in the region, including some religious leaders, were of the opinion that people should not be in jail for using marijuana. At the very least, the use of marijuana should be decriminalized. Some of the persons sharing this view were magistrates, judges, the former Archbishop of Trinidad and Tobago and some members of Parliament across CARICOM. She recalled the consultation in Barbados where a group of elderly persons - many of them with disabilities and in wheel chairs - advocated for a change of the law in order to access marijuana medication.

With specific reference to Grenada, Professor Antoine advised that the Commission did not get the opportunity to host a consultation in Grenada. However, the result of the poll that the Commission conducted in Grenada in 2018 showed that sixty-one percent of those surveyed favoured a change in the law.

4.2.1.1. Social Justice Issues

Professor Antoine noted that, during the period in which the Commission conducted its work, the issue of social injustices, associated with the legal regime of marijuana, was the most prominent. The issue of medical marijuana had not featured significantly. However, since the Commission had written its report in 2018, there has been increasing interest in the potential for medical marijuana and currently, medical marijuana had become a prominent issue in the region. She emphasized that, notwithstanding the prominence that medical marijuana had taken, social justice issues remain at the forefront of the necessity to undertake a reform of the legal regime pertaining to marijuana.

4.3. Draconian Prohibition Regime

Describing as draconian the legal regime which criminalized marijuana and its use, Professor Antoine made reference to the stories of trauma shared by citizens across the consultations, and particularly, by members of the Rastafarian faith. She made the following observations regarding the legal regime in respect of marijuana:-

- **Violates the Rights of Citizens:** This legal regime was ineffective, unjust, discriminatory and does not respect the rights of citizens. It lacked legitimacy.
- **Unable to Explore Economic Opportunities:** It was also preventing the region from taking advantage of whatever economic opportunities exist in the cannabis industry.
- **Hindering Scientific Research:** It constrained scientific research, thus hindering progress re the research and development agenda in respect of marijuana.
- **Access to Medicine:** The legal regime was also prohibiting access to medicine that can heal more effectively and more cheaply than traditional pharmaceuticals.
- **Offends the Rule of Law:** The legal regime offends the rule of law; it is not good law. A law must have a purpose; it must correct a wrong or some mischief in society. There was never a rational basis for criminalizing the use of marijuana. What harm or mischief was the law intended to correct?

4.4. History of Prohibition of Marijuana

- **Used Worldwide:** Marijuana has been used for thousands of years among various ethnicities around the world.
- **Historical/Cultural Significance in the Caribbean:**
 - **Healing Properties:** One cannot ignore the cultural and historical significance of marijuana to Caribbean. Several ethnic groups in the region – African, Asians, Middle East - knew it as having healing properties.
 - **Brought by Indian Indentured Servants:** It was brought to the region by indentured servants from India. In the Caribbean, our East Indian foreparents used marijuana as a means of relaxation when they came in from working in fields in late evening. There were also other uses such as making bush teas.
- **Introduction of Prohibition:** About 100 years ago, in the 1920s, the prohibition regime was introduced, classifying marijuana as a *dangerous drug*, criminalizing and stigmatizing its use.
- **Legal Fiction:** This *dangerous drug* classification was not based on any supporting scientific or medical data.
- **Impact of Prohibition:** However, this unfounded classification led to international treaties, within a context of strict liability. Discretion could not be exercised by officers of the judicial system in respect of penalties associated with the use of marijuana.
- **Violated People's Rights:** The harsh law, premised on the classification of *dangerous drug*, “down-pressed” the rights of people.

- **Sordid History:**
 - **Criminalization/Stigmatization:** The connotation of marijuana as a dangerous drug caused harm to the user who was stigmatized and was considered as having a bad reputation. This can be compared with the history of alcohol which was also once classified as a dangerous drug. Once the prohibition was lifted, notwithstanding the harm caused by the use of alcohol, it became socially accepted. The same applies to cannabis.
 - **For the Protection of Economic Interests in the USA:** Enough evidence suggests that the introduction of a legal prohibition regime was not an accident but a deliberate move by certain interests in the USA to stifle competition to alcohol.
- **Advocacy by Rastafarians:** Use of marijuana is part of the sacrament of the Rastafarian religion. **Rastas have kept the light burning**, advocating for its legalization, citing many biblical passages to support the Rastafarian position that marijuana was a sacred plant that had been criminalized
- **Treatment of Glaucoma:** In the 1960s, the Caribbean was one of the first regions in the world. to start patenting medical products from marijuana. One, Dr. West, from Mona Campus of UWI created **cannisol** for the treatment of glaucoma and this medicine was patented.
- **WHO Declassification of Marijuana as a Dangerous Drug:** An important development took place in December 2020 when the World Health Organisation declared that marijuana should be declassified as a dangerous drug. This decision had come about as a result of considerable and sustained international lobbying which had advocated that there was no basis for marijuana being classified as a dangerous drug.

4.5. Issues for the Caribbean

Professor Antoine identified the following as the issues for the region in respect of the existing legal regime with regard to marijuana:-

- Social justice issues
- Efficacy of law enforcement - did the draconian laws serve any purpose?
- Human rights
- The moral basis of law

4.5.1. Social Justice Issues:

- **Right to Health/Protection from Discrimination:** It was the opinion of the Commission that marijuana/cannabis should not be viewed through a narrow criminal law lens. The law had failed. Rather, marijuana should be taken out of the criminal justice system, altogether. The Commission recommended that, in going forward, the issue of marijuana be framed as a public health issue and a human rights issue in the context of the right to health and protection from discrimination.

- **Justifiable Public Health Concerns:** Notwithstanding that there was no justification for classifying cannabis as a dangerous drug, Professor Antoine cautioned that the growing ground swell and embrace of cannabis should be tempered by the justifiable public health concerns given that cannabis does have psychoactive properties
- **CARICOM’s Emphasis on Medical Marijuana:** Professor Antoine also expressed her concerns about CARICOM’s embrace of the medical marijuana industry since the launch of the Commission’s Report in 2018, with less emphasis on the deep social injustice issues which, in her view, are the priority.
- **Legal Regime Induced More Harm than Good:** The evidence and data investigated by the Commission revealed that public opinion was of the view that the existing prohibitionist regime induced more harm than good. The draconian laws did not prevent Caribbean nationals, including children, from accessing marijuana while, on the other hand, there was also the phenomenon of medical refugees who were unable to access cannabis from other countries without harassment.
- **Prioritize Social Justice Issues:** Professor Antoine stressed that the issue of social justice was the priority of the Commission’s report and she wanted Grenada to “get it right” in respect of prioritizing the social justice issues addressed by the Commission’s report. E.g. the penalties in respect of cannabis were incongruous and unjust.

4.5.1.1. Marijuana Myths:

Professor Antoine noted the following popular marijuana myths:-

- **Criminal Behaviour:** Marijuana caused one to engage in certain types of criminal behaviour. This was contrary to scientific evidence which suggested that cannabis causes one to “chill”. It does not rile one up in the way alcohol does. **It was the draconian laws and not the substance, which created the situation of criminality e.g. gangs etc.**
- **Gateway Drug:** If one started with marijuana, one would graduate to using harder drugs such as cocaine. This has been disproven by scientific evidence. Professor Antoine noted the following:-
 - The use of marijuana was no more harmful than alcohol. She referenced the following lethal rate rankings:-
 - **Lethal rate rankings:** cocaine – 100 percent; alcohol - 50 percent and marijuana – 0 percent
- **Addiction and Psychosis:** There have been also been suggestions that, as a result of the use of marijuana, some young people have ended up mad. While this may be so:-
 - **Alcohol-Marijuana Combination:** Young people often combine alcohol with marijuana.
 - **Impact on Adolescent Brain:** Marijuana does have an impact on the adolescent brain. Young people should not be using marijuana.

Professor Antoine concluded that the proven scientific evidence shows that, in general, the benefits of marijuana outweigh its risks.

4.5.1.2. Cautionary Approach re Marijuana and Youth/Children

- **Psychoactive Properties of Cannabis:** While Professor Antoine emphasized that the status quo must change, she also observed that one had to accept that there was the potential for negative health impact re the use of marijuana - similar to the potential for negative health impact of alcohol and tobacco. Given that cannabis does have psychoactive properties, there was the potential for possible mental health complications.
- **Impact on Youth and Children:** There were conflicting reports in respect of the impact of marijuana use on youth and therefore a need for more research in respect of the impact on youth. The Commission therefore adopted a conservative approach in respect of the access to and use of cannabis by youth and children, counselling caution in this regard.
 - **The “Chill” Factor:** Marijuana/cannabis demotivates, i.e. the “chill” factor. Hence it was not recommended that it be used by persons under the age of 21 years, unless prescribed for medical purposes.

4.5.2. Efficacy of Law Enforcement

- **Counter Productive Prohibitionist Regime:** A prohibitionist regime is counterproductive.
 - **Access by Children:** Children were accessing marijuana in spite of the prohibitionist regime.
 - **Inequities in the Justice System:** The regime has created inequities in the justice system. When a young person goes to jail, sometimes, there is even more access to marijuana.
- **Harshness of Criminal Justice System:** If one cannot pay the fine, one ends up in jail. Even senior citizens get incarcerated. There is a certain “warehousing” of people in jails, destroying individuals and families, without benefits to society.
- **Ineffective and Wasteful:** The prohibitionist regime was an ineffective, wasteful system. Resources could be better employed fighting serious crime. Police in Jamaica were of the opinion that cannabis was not a causative factor in criminal conduct.
- **Discriminatory:** The law was discriminatory and subject to being abused. The police were only doing their job and tended to target the poor and marginalized since they were easier targets given that they could not afford legal services.
- **Coping Mechanism” :** Drug use was a coping mechanism in dealing with poverty and lack of opportunity. That problem was not solved by “throwing people in jail”.
- **Inappropriate Penalties:** Penalties were inappropriate and ludicrous. While a person could be sentenced to up to 40 years for possession of 1.5 grams marijuana, a person who committed a serious crime, such as almost killing someone, could get a non-custodial sentence.

- **Over-sentencing:** The judges did not have any discretion in sentencing and there were many instances of over-sentencing.
- **Stereotyping and Prejudices:** The prohibition regime has persecuted and stereotyped the Rastafarians. The government of Antigua and Barbuda has offered an apology and there has been talk of reparations being considered.

4.5.3. Human Rights

- **Jurisprudence:** Jurisprudence was concluding that there were human rights issues with respect to health and marijuana. The results of a number of cases in the USA and Canada which have challenged the prohibition regime on the basis of the right to health, suggested that the prohibition regime could not stand. In Canada an individual who was growing a marijuana plant in order to have access to marijuana for the treatment of his cancer won his case on the basis of his human right to health.
- **Constitutional Challenge in St. Kitts-Nevis:** In St. Kitts-Nevis, the Commission's Report was used to rule in favour of a Rastafarian on the issue of self-medication and the "right to health". The law was deemed unconstitutional and the Government was given a time period in which to make the necessary amendments in line with the ruling of the Court. More and more cases were coming before the court on issues of the right of Rastafarians to meditate and to practice their religion.
- **Learning Lessons:** There were lessons to be learned from those countries such as Uruguay which have moved in the direction of legalization of marijuana. Within the region, Jamaica was one of the first countries to undertake reform of its marijuana laws, decriminalizing marijuana in 2015. In Jamaica, there had not been any discernible increases of recorded psychosis cases/mental health issues and there was growing support for legalization in Jamaica - 90 percent at the last poll that was conducted.

4.5.4. Legal Status and Money Laundering

Professor Antoine noted that while there is the changing situation in respect of marijuana, there were other considerations besides human rights and public health. A challenge confronting the development of the marijuana industry is the money laundering aspects of the law. Proceeds obtained from the marijuana, which remains an illegal substance, would be treated as proceeds of crime. In California, for example, the marijuana businesses are unable to obtain banking services. Thus, there are hard core financial issues to address in respect of marijuana while it remains an illegal substance.

4.5.5. Renegotiating Treaties/Conventions

Changes are required in respect of the international treaties entered into re the prohibition regime. As Chair of the CARICOM Commission, she had asked for a formal legal position from CARICOM. Professor Antoine recommended that CARICOM needed to join with like-minded

model states which have legalized marijuana in order to have a strong negotiating position, e.g. Canada which legalized in 2018. Strong positions of solidarity were needed.

4.6. Economic Benefits

4.6.1. Decriminalization vs. Legalization

Under the aegis of the Commission, a separate study looked at the economic benefits to be derived from marijuana and what were the possible legal framework. The study concluded that, overall, marijuana reform would benefit with legalization as opposed to decriminalization. That would permit the economic benefits to be exploited.

4.6.2. Protecting the Interests of Small Farmers

- **Medical Marijuana Niche Market:** Medical marijuana was a niche that could benefit the Caribbean. It was a billion dollar industry and the Caribbean was a force to be reckoned with respect to its potential for the development of medical marijuana. There was a lot of focus pm the region from the Canadian firms.
- **Take Over by Big, Foreign Interests/Persistent Poverty:** While there were benefits to be derived from the development of medical marijuana, Professor Antoine cautioned about repeating mistakes of the past - selling out to big international interests, just producing raw material and, in the end, really gaining nothing.
- **The New Danger:** Once governments begun to offer licences/regulate the industry, they would run the risk of liberalization which would impoverish and leave the small grower behind. She described the liberalization of the marijuana industry as the “new danger”. She advised that a group of persons, including herself, had organized themselves into a group to lobby Caribbean governments to ensure small traditional farmers were not left behind in the development of the marijuana industry. This was a great worry. In Jamaica, big money had already taken over.
- **Concerns of Growers in SVG:** In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the growers expressed these concerns at the consultations. When the legal environment was regularized and licences could be obtained, how would small farmers, once considered criminals, transform from illegal producers to being competitive entrepreneurs? Access to land was of particular concern. Currently, these growers were cultivating marijuana on state lands, up in the hills. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Government was focusing on the development of medical marijuana and had allocated 250 acres of land to traditional growers.
- **Equity and Licensing:** Professor Antoine stressed that it was not merely a matter of decriminalization/legalization. There must be equity in respect of the issue of licensing. In Jamaica, there were many issues in respect of licensing. The small farmers and those traditionally in the struggle for the legalization of marijuana have been “left behind”.

- **Scope for Entrepreneurship:** There was a lot of scope for entrepreneurship given the diversity of products and the niche markets in respect of marijuana. **Medical Research:** In the Caribbean, medical research was hindered by the absence of legalization.

4.6.3. Lessons of Persistent Poverty

Professor Antoine expressed the hope that CARICOM had learnt the lessons of “persistent poverty” from the region’s experience of sugar and bananas and that, in going forward, would not just sell the region’s interest to big foreign companies. Instead, the Caribbean hegemony should be protected to ensure that its people were not left behind.

4.7. Recommendations

Professor Antoine concluded her presentation with the following recommendations of the Commission:-

- **Dismantle Prohibition:** The end goal for CARICOM should be the dismantling of the prohibition regime in its totality, replacing it with a strictly regulated framework similar to that in place for alcohol and tobacco which were harmful substances but not criminalized.
- **Change the Status Quo:** The status quo should not be maintained. CARICOM countries were not all at the same stage in respect of legislative reform. The bottom line should be decriminalization. People should not be put in jail for the use of marijuana
- **Responsible Control Regime:** A responsible control regime was required, dictating the conditions under which marijuana was to be sold.
- **Education and Young People:** Education should be prioritized, particularly targeting young people. The change of the legal framework should not create a *glamour industry*. People, particularly young people should not feel that it was a “free up” legal environment.
- **Public Health/Social Justice Approach:** The legal regime for marijuana should be based on social justice and human rights considerations.
- **Banned from Public Spaces:** For the time being, cannabis should be banned from all public spaces
- **Special Provisions re Rastafarian Community:** Special provisions should be made for the Rastafarian community. There are models that can be looked at from other countries.
- **Permission to Grow a Minimum Number of Plants:** Allow persons to grow a minimum number of plants and/or possess a minimum amount of marijuana. Legal precedent has already been set in respect of an individual being able to grow plants to access marijuana for self-medication.
- **Public-Private Partnership for Cottage Industries:** Public-Private Partnerships should be considered in respect of the establishment of cottage industries based on marijuana.

4.8. Concluding Remarks

- **Rationale for Reform of Prohibitionist Legal Regime:** The Commission considered that there were deep rationales for law reform of the prohibitionist legal regime with regard to cannabis. The regime was harmful, ineffective and unjust. The justification for new laws was supported by strong public opinion and credible scientific and empirical data analysis. Reform should be approached from a public health rights focus, a position that has been embraced by the CARICOM Heads of Government since 2002. The time is right for impactful, dynamic law reform.
- **Social Justice Priorities:** The increasing interests in the medical ganja industry must not overtake social justice considerations. Social justice must remain the priority.

4.9. Plenary Session: Queries/Observations/Comments

4.9.1. Queries

- **Supply in the Context of Decriminalization:** Hon. Peter David enquired about the expectations/experience in countries of the region, where governments had moved to decriminalize the use/possession of a minimal amount of marijuana? Where were persons obtaining the marijuana since some persons may prefer not to grow their own? Persons with entrepreneurial spirit would anticipate this demand and set up a business to satisfy it but would not be encouraged to trade in it.
- **Decriminalization vs. Legalization:** Dr. Stephen Fletcher asked Professor Antoine to give her opinion in respect of the two approaches, decriminalization and legalization, particularly in the context of the challenges posed by decriminalization and existing police infrastructure.

4.9.2. Response

4.9.2.1. Supply

Professor Antoine noted that the issue of supply in the context of decriminalization was still a grey area.

- **Illegal Supply/Source:** In Trinidad and Tobago, which permitted possession of up to 30 grams, users were still obtaining marijuana from an illegal source. The absence of law about the source/supply was a deficiency.
- **Regulations Pertaining to Supply:** In Jamaica, laws had been established in respect of supply.
- **Urgency to Create Relief:** The urgency of the situation was to create relief – to curb the arrest and criminalization of persons using and possessing small amounts.
- **Addressing the Social Justice Issue:** Decriminalization therefore creates relief and addresses the social justice issue.
- **SVG and Medical Marijuana:** St. Vincent and the Grenadines decided to focus on medical marijuana without decriminalization, advising there would be an amnesty and

instructions to the police to cease and desist from arresting persons for the possession of marijuana. However, some police did continue to make arrests.

- **Relief by Decriminalization:** If a decriminalization law does not exist, one cannot instruct the police to cease and desist from arresting persons. Such instructions violate the “rule of law” and arrests will have political overtones. Therefore the simplest way to go forward is to “bring relief” from being arrested and thrown in jail, for small amounts.
- **Laws for Industry/Licensing:** Creating laws/licensing arrangements for industry is a complex matter, particularly if one wants to safeguard the interests of traditional growers. Big companies will want to monopolize the industry, keeping out competition from the small producers.

4.9.2.2. Decriminalization vs. Legalization

- **Chair’s Position, Legalization with Regulatory Framework:** Professor Antoine shared that her own position favoured the approach of legalization with a regulatory framework as exists for alcohol and tobacco. **But legalization should not mean liberalization.** She also advised that her position was not shared by all members of Commission
- **Position of the Commission:** Members of the Commission agreed as follows:-
 - **Short Term Decriminalization:** There was **unanimous agreement** among the members of the Commission that, **in the short term, marijuana should be decriminalized.** Some members of the Commission thought that, in the short term, the region was “not ready” and legalization would result in abuse re the use of marijuana.
 - **Long Term Legalization:** All members of the Commission agreed to legalization in the long term, with reservations about the timing of the legalization.

4.10. Wrap Up Remarks by Moderator:

In wrapping up this session, the moderator, Bishop Harvey, thanked Professor Antoine profusely for her contribution to the Round Table, noting that she had not allowed the challenges of presenting under health constraints to affect the quality of her presentation. Describing her as “magnificent”, he noted that he “*could not thank Professor Antoine enough*” for a “*very human presentation*”. Bishop Harvey promised that the organisers of the Round Table would ensure the widest dissemination of her presentation. He also advised that he would be seeking her assistance and collaboration to develop a document that would assist the churches in Grenada *to speak truth to righteousness* on the issue of marijuana. A lot of people in their righteousness do not listen to truth.

5. Response to Report: Health and Social Considerations

This panel was moderated by Ms. Cheryl Kirton.

5.1.Respondent: Dr. Wendy Crawford-Daniel, Research Sociologist, Professor of Social Sciences, SGU

Dr. Crawford-Daniel noted that she was pleased that Grenada had gotten to the point of changing attitudes and its position with regard to marijuana. In her opinion, Grenada should be leading the rest of CARICOM in this regard given certain deliberate actions that were taken over 40 years ago:-

- The New Jewel Movement⁷ used the decriminalization of marijuana as a platform to attract youth who, at that time, were wise to the use of marijuana
- On assuming control of government, the People's Revolutionary Government⁸ permitted the decriminalization of small amounts of marijuana. However, this position did not last long and the brunt of the reversal was felt by the Rastafarian community.

5.1.1. Human and Social Impact of Marijuana Use

Her presentation focused on:-

- Social impact of drug policy
- Social impact of use among children and youth
- Social implications of decriminalization of marijuana – pros and cons

5.1.1.1.Historical and Sociological Context

Dr. Crawford-Daniel placed her discussion within the following historical and sociological context:-

- The following has influenced the form and intensity of the **social impact of marijuana**:-
 - **Definition and Meaning:** What is the history and evolution of the definition and the meaning of dangerous drug?
 - **Perception:** There is the perception that marijuana is a drug.
 - **Basis of the Perception:** On what basis was marijuana perceived as a drug?
 - **Designation:** Marijuana was designated as a drug.
 - **Negative Perception/Attitude:** What was the origin of the Caribbean's negative perception of and attitude towards marijuana?
- **Negative Connotation:** Given that marijuana was perceived as a drug, the connotation and negativity associated with marijuana has made the decriminalization challenging and difficult.

⁷ a political organization

⁸ overthrew the elected government of Eric Gairy and assumed power on March 13th, 1979

5.1.1.1.1. History and Evolution of Definition

- **Traditional Sacred/Positive Perception of Marijuana:** History has shown that marijuana held deep historical, medical, cultural and social significance for the people of the Caribbean. According to the Report of the CARICOM Commission, marijuana was brought to the Caribbean region by the indentured servants from Asia, specifically the Indians, who used it in their spiritual rituals. It was later adopted by the Rastafarians who viewed it as a gift of nature from God and used it in prayers and other spiritual practices. This was the sacred and the positive perception that existed in the region with regard to marijuana.
- **Imposition of Designation *Dangerous Drug*:** The designation/demonization of marijuana as a *dangerous drug* was imposed upon the region. The imposition of this definition by colonial exploiters, the British, in the 1930s had to do with:-
 - **Eurocentric View of the World:** The British colonials considered themselves the centre of the universe, morally, ethically and spiritually superior to the people of the region.
 - **Exercise of Colonial Power:** The British exercised their colonial, acquired power on the will of the people of the region, designating marijuana a *dangerous drug*. Their designation of marijuana as a *dangerous drug* prevailed notwithstanding the region's long history of marijuana - as traditional medicine and therapeutic treatment; its use in religious rituals and rites of passage; its use for meditation, relaxation and enjoyment; use in communication with ancestors, in social gatherings and the communal life of the people.
 - **Change in Perception/Attitudes:** Over time, the key institutions of socialization – the education system and the church – combined with the legal system to force the people of the region to internalize and embrace the British designation of the criminalization of marijuana through the *United Kingdom Dangerous Drugs Ordinance of 1937*. This designation as a dangerous drug was enshrined into law in Grenada.
 - **Impact of Designation:** This criminal designation and imposed law can be credited for the social problems that have emerged as locals were stripped of their rights to practice their religion and their rituals.

5.1.1.2. Cultural Context re Definition and Perception

- **Education and Religion:** The region's negative attitude to marijuana was nurtured by the institutions of the socialization process – school and church – which, consciously and deliberately, manipulated the people of the region into internalizing the attitude that marijuana was/is a *dangerous drug*. This therefore emphasizes the importance of education with regard to changing the prevailing negative attitude to marijuana.

- **Impact of US Drug Policy:** The manipulation by the socialization process has been reinforced by the policy of the USA on drugs and its *war on drugs* in the region where the focus has been on marijuana. The region's *herb*, i.e. marijuana, designated a *dangerous drug*, was subsumed in the *war on drugs* waged by the USA while the people of the region have blindly followed their political leaders who acquiesced to others, permitting them to shape the direction of Caribbean society.

5.1.1.3. Changing Perceptions/Support for Decriminalization

Dr. Crawford-Daniel noted that according to the statistics of the research cited in the Report of the CARICOM Commission, the case for decriminalization has been made. There has been a change in perception and growing support throughout the region, including Grenada, for the decriminalization of marijuana. This change in perception and attitude may be due to a number of social factors including:-

- **Scientific Evidence:** The role of science in providing evidence with which to challenge previously held negative beliefs about marijuana.
- **Access to Information:** Knowledge and information about marijuana have become more readily accessible to all via the Internet.
- **Not a Dangerous Drug:** Information about marijuana and drugs had shown that marijuana was not more harmful than any other controlled substances such as alcohol, tobacco and even uncontrolled substances and other herbs/plants commonly used by the people of the Caribbean.
- **Huge Profits from Marijuana:** Technology had put information at the finger tips of people of the regions. This access to information, data and statistics showed that the very countries that criminalized the marijuana in the Caribbean were now legitimately making big profits from marijuana. Dr. Crawford-Daniel opined that the hypocrisy of this reality was very alarming.
- **Disproportionately Negative Impact on the Vulnerable:** Technology had enabled access to data, statistics and policy positions on marijuana that enabled one to see the inequalities, bias and prejudices against the most vulnerable in our society:- the patterns of arrest, convictions, punishment and imprisonment. Dr. Crawford-Daniel remarked that she was pleased that the Report of the Commission gave attention to the disproportionate negative impact on the most vulnerable.
- **Evolution and Change:** Dr. Crawford-Daniel observed that in the social environment, nothing was static and that change would occur over time - changes in attitudes, perceptions, definitions and ultimately regulations and policies. etc. Referring to the definition of *dangerous drug* that had been imposed on marijuana, she advanced that *this too will pass*.

5.1.2. Arguments Against Decriminalization

Everything had pros and cons and was time sensitive. Among those arguments put forward by persons against decriminalization were that marijuana use: -

- Caused conflict with family and friends
- Resulted in poor judgment
- Led to violence and criminal behaviour resulting in problems with the law.
- Is the first step towards the use of harder drugs
- Caused anxiety among young people
- Affected the ability of young people to stay in school and hold employment

5.1.2.1. Erroneous Generalizations

These arguments reflected erroneous generalizations - that outcomes for some were the outcomes for everyone and would exist across the board. She noted that while attention must be paid to the arguments of those who were against decriminalization, many of those arguments were myths, some of which had been addressed in Professor Antoine's presentation.

5.1.3. Arguments in Favour of Decriminalization

Among the reported and recorded pros in favour of marijuana use was that some users became more sociable and outgoing. Their social life improved as a result of more interaction with family and friends.

5.1.3.1. Is Marijuana Use Linked to Violence and Crime?

Dr. Crawford-Daniel made reference to a study undertaken among the prison population in the OECS to establish whether or not there was a link between the use of marijuana and violence and crime. She had conducted the research in Grenada. She was informed by the potential respondents that they would not participate in the survey if it referred to marijuana as drug. This matter had to be rectified by the authorities responsible for the survey before she could proceed.

She noted that all respondents had given her variations of the same answer as follows: *“You can know when there is ganja in the prison. We are peaceful; we are in meditation. There is no fight. We retreat and we meditate. When there is no ganja, up here is a war zone.”*

5.1.3.1.1. Definition/Perception and Stereotypes

This survey had also brought home the observation about definition. Embedded in the formulation of the research questions were the negative stereotypes foisted on marijuana by the definition/perception of it being a dangerous drug. The potential respondents had resisted that definition.

5.1.4. Concluding Remarks

Dr. Crawford-Daniel concluded her presentation by emphasizing the long history of marijuana use in the region associated with many religious, ethnic and cultural traditions. She offered the following recommendations to policy-makers and regulators:-

- **Shifting Perceptions:** Pay attention to shifting perceptions within culture.
- **What Has to be Done:** Pay attention to what had to be done; begin the necessary social and health provisions for those who could be negatively affected by the use of marijuana.
- **Protect Children:** Institute legislation to protect children.
- **Education:** Conduct an extensive education programme on marijuana, based on scientific facts and not on moral authority.

5.2. Respondent, *Dr. Omowale Amuleru-Marshall, Professor Emeritus, Dept of Public Health, SGU*

5.2.1. Report of the CARICOM Commission

Dr. Amuleru-Marshall advised that he was pleased to be part of the discussion on the Report of the CARICOM Commission. He complimented Professor Antoine and her team noting that the report was comprehensive; richly evidence-based and balanced; reflected a lot of work and should be promulgated widely. He was pleased and proud that the Report was a product of our region; excited that it was the output of a regional initiative and personally, aspired to the day when CARICOM would become a multi-state country.

He made further observations and offered suggestions:-

- **Direction:** The Commission's Report gave direction as to what should be done. However, there was a need to ensure that everyone in society - political directorate, academicians, policy makers, community activists et al – understood the information contained in the Report.
- **Democratize Discussion of the Issues:** A space should be created for *patient* presentations⁹. It must be ensured that everyone in various sectors of societies understood the subject at hand.
- **Decision Making:** Decision-making in respect of the direction to be taken with regard to marijuana should reflect a broadly democratic, non-discriminatory and participatory arrangement with communities.
- **Sovereignty:** He expressed disappointment that the region should have wait on US, Canada and Europe before it could express its sovereignty as a region. What were the constraints in respect of Treaty obligations or other constraints that forced the sovereign nations of CARICOM to comply with “big brother”?

⁹ Presentations by those who experienced negative consequences after use.

- **Public Health Perspective:** From a public health perspective, if a response was more harmful than the problem, then go with that option that reduced harm. **The consequences of criminalization far exceeded any expected or scientific negative effect, particularly in respect of marijuana.**
- **Decriminalization/Legalization:** He was fully comfortable with the position of decriminalization and, in some cases, full legislation in regard to the use of certain substances.
- **Regional Trajectory:** He was excited that Grenada and the rest of the region appeared to be moving in the direction of decriminalization of marijuana. There was a continuum of decriminalization to legislation.
- **Regional Concensus on Decriminalization:** A concensus could be nurtured across the region in respect of decriminalization.

5.2.2. Public Health and Human Rights Approach

He observed that the Commission's Report emphasized a public health and human rights approach to marijuana.

5.2.2.1. Public Health

He made the following observations about a public health approach:-

- **More than Respond to Problems:** Public health was not, in the first instance, responding to problems. It was not about therapy or reaction, no matter how efficacious the response. Public health must do more than respond to problems.
- **Cultivating Human Beingsness: Public health was about the well-being of humans from the biological and psycho-social perspective.** It was about working from the micro to macro levels, creating conditions in which human beings could "become more human".
- **Reduction of Inequities: A public health approach was about the reduction of inequities.**
 - **Universal Health Coverage:** Through universal health coverage, a comprehensive package of treatment must be available.
 - **Available to Anyone and Everyone:** Whatever was available to anyone must be available to everyone **without** any *out of pocket expenses*.
- **Participation in Decision-making:** Communities must be empowered to participate in decision making and to provide feedback on the health services that they receive.
- **Equity re Community Access to Health Services:** There must be provisions for equitable access by all communities, notwithstanding their geographical location.
- **Social Determinants of Health:** Work must be done on the social determinants. Among these were poverty, unemployment and miseducation/mal-education which increased vulnerability, not only to problems of substance abuse but also increased vulnerability to a wider range of problems.

- **Vulnerabilities/Circumstances vs. Behavioural Choices:** It was the same people who were measured at high risk on a range of problems/issues. What made them vulnerable were the circumstances of their communities and neighbourhoods and not the individually anchored behavioural choices that some persons tended to emphasize.

5.2.2.2. More than Decriminalization and Offering Treatment

Dr. Amuleru-Marshall concluded by noting the following:-

- **Available to Everyone on Demand/Without Barrier of Costs:** We all must understand that a public health orientation and human rights approach meant much more than decriminalization and offering treatment. Treatment had to be available on demand. Wherever there was a need, competent services must be available to everyone without the barrier of costs.
- **Not A Commodity/A Human Right:** Access to competent health services, wherever and whenever it was needed was not a privilege. It was not a commodity but absolutely a human right.

5.3. Respondent: Dr. Narasimhan Prabhakar, *Professor, St. George's, Department of Clinical Teaching Unit and Psychiatry, SGU*

Dr. Prabhakar remarked that it was a great opportunity to be part of the (Round Table) discussion and acknowledged his Caribbean mentors¹⁰, back in the 1980s at the Mona Campus, University of the West Indies – Professor Michael Beaubran, Dr. George Mahy and Dr. (Freddie) Hicklyn.

He described the Commission's Report as "one of the best reports" he had read, noting that "everything is already written" but there was need for discussion on the report and "approval" of the direction it had proposed. The following is a summary of Dr. Prabhakar's observations and recommendations:-

- **Reservations re Legalization:** Dr. Prabhakar declared his reservations about the legalization of marijuana.
- **Impact on Parents and Families:** He shared his concerns about "people in particular". Every year, over the past 40 years, he has had to engage with parents and family who were suffering because of **the behaviour of the patient** – a child or relative – who was smoking marijuana and exhibiting behavioural disorders.
- **Underlying Disease/Disorder:** Perhaps the patient already had an underlying psychiatric disease/disorder that was exacerbated by smoking.

¹⁰ Dr. Michael Beaubran and Dr. George Mahy were renowned Grenadian psychiatrists.

- **Different Experiences:** He had also seen persons who had smoked marijuana once and “got into trouble”. They got out of trouble and never smoked marijuana again.
- **Inadequate Health Facilities/Services:** While he was not blaming the smoking of marijuana for the problems exhibited by the patient who smoked, he had concerns given the existing, inadequate health facilities/services and the negative, impact on the families of patients exhibiting those disorders.
- **Research Recommended:** He recommended that there should be prior research to identify whether there was any relationship between smoking of marijuana and the behavioural disorders exhibited by some persons who had smoked marijuana.

5.4. Plenary: Questions, Observations, Comments

5.4.1. Legalization with Regulation/Preceded by Education

The following were the observations and recommendations of a member of the Rastafarian community who also shared that he was pleased and excited to be at the Round Table:-

- **Marijuana and Mental Problems:** Most people said that marijuana caused mental problems. He noted that the panellists had not attributed mental problems to the use of marijuana. For years he had advocated that marijuana does not create mental problems or side effects. It may arise after smoking but as a result of someone’s personal lifestyle, some inherited disease or otherwise.
- **Personal Experience with Marijuana:** He was 11 years when he began smoking marijuana. When he was 9 years old, he was told that he had a mental problem. As a result, his mother did not force him to do anything educational because she feared that his mental health would be negatively impacted. When he was introduced to marijuana (at 11 years), he did his smoking “under cover”. From that time to present, he has been inspired by marijuana and it had “given him everything that he has”.
- **Right Approach/Education:** Grenada must take the right approach. People in Grenada needed to be re-educated about marijuana. Marijuana was a pleasant herb that had healed him over the years.
- **Advocating for Legalization:** Grenada should be more advanced in respect of its policies on marijuana. The time for decriminalization has passed. Since 2005, there have been calls for decriminalization. In 2009, the Nyabingi House of Grenada approached government authorities, advocating for legalization. They were rebuffed and laughed at. Government never saw the benefits that could result from the change of policy. It was now taking a cue from the United States of America and Canada.
- **Legalization with Regulation:** He was advocating for legalization with regulation. Legalization must be preceded by a consistent education programme.

5.4.2. Marijuana a Weapon of War?

Bishop Clyde Harvey remarked that he had not heard anyone mention marijuana/cannabis as a *weapon of war*. He recalled the Black Power demonstrations/social revolution of the 1970s when young, black men from the ghettos of Trinidad marched in the streets of Port-of Spain but those protests came to an end very suddenly.

When he went to study in the Oakland, California in the 1980s, he met a number of persons who remembered Makandal Daaga (a.k.a Geddes Granger) who was the leader of that social revolution in Trinidad and Tobago. They remembered that Daaga had visited Huey Newton, one of the Black Panther leaders and shared with information with Newton about the protests and the emergence of the Black Power movement in the Caribbean. Newton told Daaga that by the time he got back to Port of Spain, marijuana would be on every block. Bishop Harvey advised that, years later, Daaga confirmed that indeed, when he had gotten back to Port of Spain, marijuana was on every block and persons were “chilling”.

Bishop Harvey observed, that when Professor Antoine used the word *chiller*, he wondered whether this *chiller* had been used on people of African descent in the region so that **we did not become angry enough to make the social changes that were needed in the Caribbean**. While he was unaware of any similar experience in the region, he was of the opinion that marijuana has been used as a weapon of war against the Caribbean people, particularly against young males so that they were *emasculated and chilling out*. He suggested that the use of marijuana as a weapon of war against Caribbean people should be further explored.

A member of the Rastafarian community, House of Nyabingi, gave his perspective on whether marijuana had been used as a weapon of war. He observed as follows:-

- **Creation of Fear and Stigma:** Marijuana had always been used as a tool of war. People had spoken ill against marijuana, creating that fear and stigma of marijuana as a harmful and dangerous drug.
- **Ancient Practices and Use:** Information existed about the ancient practices of smoking and other uses of marijuana.
- **Eurocentric View:** There were many things that could help Caribbean people. However, the Eurocentric view and propaganda created a negative environment and perception of Rastafarians and the use of marijuana.
- **Education:** Education was required. He also “gave thanks” that he was able to attend the present discussion.

5.4.3. Mr. Syisha Williams

- **Barrier to Accessing Medical Help:** Mr. Williams queried whether the current law, which criminalizes a plant, contributed more to the problems of people who came in to see the doctor because they were doing things in secret whereas they should be seeking medical help.
- **Fear Hindering Legalization:** In December 2020, the United Nations declassified marijuana as a *dangerous drug*. The declassification cleared the way for the legalization of marijuana. What were the steps to be taken to change the law with regard to marijuana? Was the fear that had been created by its classification as a *dangerous drug* crippling action on legalization? How could Grenada break that fear cycle?

5.4.4. Denyse Ogilvie, NGO Leader

Via Zoom, Ms. Ogilvie spoke from Illinois - a US state where marijuana was legalized - where she was pursuing studies at a college where students were using drugs to assist them in studying. They used the *sativa* strain of marijuana to assist them with studies. Hereunder are the comments that were offered by Ms. Ogilvie:-

- **Learning Lessons:** While Grenada may be “lagging behind” in changing its laws with regard to marijuana, there was a lot it could learn from other countries which were more advanced in that regard.
- **Economic Possibilities:** If everyone could grow their own marijuana, the market could crash.
- **Socio-ecological Impact:**
 - **Negative Environmental Impact:** A major concern was the socio-ecological impact of growing marijuana in large areas and the impact that this would have on both the livelihoods of growers and on the land/environment. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, there were negative impacts on the land given the high incidence of fertilizer use and the clear cutting of the land.
 - **Seeds:** The origin of seeds was very important. Once marijuana was decriminalized/legalized, it should be ensured that corporations did not come in with their own seeds. Corporations were seeking to patent their seeds. The small growers would not be able to withstand the impact of that action by the corporations.
- **Farming System:** Ms. Ogilvie made reference to the system used by the female farmer in Dominica (mentioned in the presentation by Professor Antoine) who planted marijuana with her other crops. Companion planting and multiple cropping could be practiced. Marijuana could be grown in association with the other crops/herbs. All of the region’s herbs/nutraceuticals could be grown in this manner, complementing each other. This would reduce the need for artificial fertilizers.

- **Edibles:** There were now many food products infused with marijuana. E.g. chocolates which were very popular. The use of marijuana in the food industry was thriving in the United States.
- **Wellness/Well-being:** Rastafarians knew about the contribution of marijuana to wellness without understanding the clinical aspects. They used marijuana for a variety of medical reasons instead of other popular medications obtained from the pharmacy.
- **Fear Factor:** Rastas experienced persecution, trauma and incarceration for their use of marijuana; faced the social circumstances of poverty and their children had to cut their locks to attend schools.
- **Education and Knowledge:** *Knowledge is power!* The Caribbean needed to educate itself about marijuana and emancipate itself from the burdens of colonial oppression which was preventing the region from exploiting the benefits of marijuana.
- **Research:** Research is required on various aspects of marijuana. The institutions such as CARDI and UWI must undertake open research, i.e. ensure that research findings are known to all.
- **Use of Marijuana in Biblical Times:** Archeological research at the Hebrew University in Israel now points to the use of marijuana 1,000 years ago. It has been found in the resin in crucibles at the altar suggesting that oils may have been in use. If these origins were in biblical times, then the origins may be with the righteousness without them being aware of this link. They need to be educated.

5.4.5. Ras Man I, House of Nyabingi

- **Persecution of Rastas:** Rastafarians have experienced a lot of struggle on the issue of marijuana. They have been persecuted and brutalized. Marijuana was also used by other persons besides Rastas. One set of people should not be targeted.
- **No Opportunity for Other Uses:** Given that marijuana was illegal, there had not been any opportunity to explore and exploit its other uses besides smoking, since one had to get rid of marijuana from the time one was possession of it.
- **Education:** Information about marijuana has either been hidden or distorted. He was happy for the day's session and recommended that the government ensured that some organization was charged with the responsibility of educating the people on uses of marijuana besides smoking.
- **Creating a Marijuana Industry:** Grenada could look at creating an industry around marijuana. Government could "open the door" so that the people, not only Rastas, could "deal"¹¹ with marijuana. Marijuana was not harmful. It had many substances which could be used in a variety of ways.

¹¹ Exploit the many uses of marijuana

5.4.6. Response from Dr. Omowale Amuleru-Marshall:

- **Clinical Records/Individual Experiences:** Clinical records of individuals reinforced the concerns of Dr. Prabhakar. There were individuals who, upon the first use of marijuana, experienced panic attacks and anxiety, depression, psychosis, even addiction.
- **Therapeutic Response Required:** These experiences/records therefore argued for a therapeutic response and access to quality care that could be accessed without barriers and the stigma of being treated for an illegal substance.
- **Clinical Syndromes Require Competent Care:** While all substances were not addictive, e.g. alcohol, it was recognized that alcoholism was a clinical syndrome which required competent care. A comparative situation existed in respect of marijuana.
- **Driving under the Influence:** While laws against drunk driving existed, these laws were flagrantly violated, even in the presence of law enforcement officers. There were laws against the access to alcohol by adolescents. Similarly, there could be laws against the access to marijuana by persons of a certain age group. It was noteworthy that there were more deaths caused by alcohol and by tobacco than the cumulative total number of deaths resulting from the use of from illegal substances.
- **Decriminalize the Substances:** The health problems resulting from the use of these substances could not be treated by the criminal justice system. Rather, the substances should be decriminalized. The resources allocated to an ineffective criminal justice system should be spent on the provision of health care services and the professional enforcement of regulations pertaining to the substances.
- **Strengthening Health Care Services:** Among actions to be taken in respect of strengthening health care services were health promotion and prevention; early screening, identification and treatment of people who had problems.

6. Summary of “Take-Aways”, Dr. Stephen Fletcher

Dr. Fletcher identified the following as key “take-aways” of the morning’s session:-

- **Context:** Addressing the legalization of marijuana required contextualization.
- **Fear:** In response to the participant who raised the issue of the fear factor which appeared to retarding the transition to full legalization of marijuana, he offered the following observations:-
 - **Political Response:** There could be a political response. Local laws could be passed to legalize marijuana.
 - **Financial and Economic Issue:** Notwithstanding the declassification as a *dangerous drug* by the United Nations system, the banking system of the region had to contend with FATF and CFATF which could be described as the international and Caribbean “police of banking”. There was the risk of the loss of correspondent banking by regional banks, thus cutting off access to the international banking system. This would make trade impossible and would have a deleterious impact on the regional economy.

- **People’s Issue:** The presentation of the Report of the CARICOM Commission has set the right tone for a national discussion. The issue of legal reform regime of marijuana was a non-political, non-partisan issue.
- **Underlying Theme of Social Justice/Legal Reform:** The theme of social justice was central to the discussion and actions going forward. Going forward, legal reform must address the inequalities/injustices experienced by the most vulnerable in society over the years.
- **Caution re Children and Youth:** Notwithstanding the support for decriminalization/legalization, there must be caution, particularly in respect of children and youth, a position that was held by all panellists.
- **Historical and Sociological Context:** Dr. Crawford-Daniel framed the evolution of the issue in its historical and sociological context, facilitating the understanding of the impact on society as the issues unfolded.
- **Access to Quality Health Care:** Both Dr. Prabhakar and Dr. Amuleru-Marshall concurred on the need for access to quality health care for those individuals who experienced negative impacts as a result of marijuana use.
- **Public Health and Human Rights Approach:** Dr. Amuleru-Marshall further noted that the public health and human rights approach advocated by the Report of the CARICOM Commission required the following:-
 - **Participation in decision making by communities**
 - **Empowering communities** to provide feedback on the quality of services they receive
 - **Equitable Access:** There must be equitable access to health services to protect against the downside of the legalization of marijuana, particularly by children, youth and those individuals who might have negative experiences. This must be available to all communities/individuals.
- **Equitable Access and Economic Potential:** There must also be equitable access to resources to give opportunities to local growers and communities - which had been persecuted over the years - to participate and benefit from the new economic opportunities that will arise.

7. Response to Report: Economic Considerations

This panel was moderated by Mr. Lester Andall.

7.1. Respondent: *Dr. Stephen Fletcher, Former Ambassador to EU*

Dr. Fletcher thanked the organisers for the opportunity to share his thoughts on a matter that was based on the nature of Grenada’s agricultural society and would influence overall national development. He titled his presentation, *Economic and Institutional Considerations for the Cultivation, Production and Marketing of High Value Marijuana/Cannabis and Its By-products: Ganja Farmer and Ganjamonics*. The following is a summary of Dr. Fletcher’s presentation.

7.1.1. Opportunities

- **Economic Potential:** The report called for greater awareness of the economic potential and opportunities for local and international business in regard to marijuana. Dr. Fletcher described it as an opportunity for the region “to get the feet off the necks”¹² and allow us “to breathe”.¹³
- **Global Market:** Globally, marijuana was a billion-dollar industry. According to global statistics:-
 - USA Market: USD 9 billion
 - Canadian Market: USD 2.8 billion; it is expected to reach 9.2 billion by 2025.
- **Export Potential:** Dr. Fletcher cited *Euro Monitor* statistics which reflected a huge export potential for THC oil. The worth of the markets were estimated as follows:-
 - Germany is the largest market and growing – Euros 5.8 billion
 - United Kingdom - Sterling 2.8 billion
 - Canada - Cdn. \$1.53 billion
 - Australia - expected to reach AUS. \$2.3. billion by 2025.
- **Models Proposed by the Commission’s Report:** The Report proposed three models re legal framework:-
 - Decriminalization
 - Full Legalization for sale and use with state control
 - Full legalization within a competitive market frame

7.1.2. Challenges

What were the economic and business challenges that would arise once actions are taken to develop the legal space and infrastructure for the development of marijuana businesses?

- **Interests of Small Farmers vs. Large Farmers/Foreign Interests:** The report noted that tensions were likely to arise re the interest of local farmers and the larger farmers and foreign investors/foreign companies that would enter as a result of legalization.
- **Challenges re Development of a Business Model:** While marijuana was a lucrative industry globally, there were many challenges to the development of a business model that would adequately address the economic gains and returns from marijuana:-
 - **Banking Challenges:** In California, notwithstanding the existence of the legal infrastructure, over 70 percent of the marijuana business was unbanked. In Canada, 90 percent of the business was unbanked notwithstanding that Canada was a marijuana hub. Jamaica’s export of ganja oil to Canada was facilitated by the Bank of Montreal which facilitates the banking transactions by ganja farmers.
 - **FATF/CFATF:** The region’s banking sector was “policed” by the Financial Action Task Force and the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force

¹² Analogy adapted from “*I can’t breathe*”, a slogan associated with the *Black Lives Matter* movement in the United States. In 2020, George Floyd, an unarmed black man was choked to death as a result of a policeman placing his foot on Mr. Floyd’s neck.

¹³ Ibid

which still considered business transactions in regard to marijuana as “the proceeds of illegal crime”.

- **Challenges of the Export Market:** Notwithstanding the huge export potential, marijuana, as an agricultural crop, would face the same challenges that all agricultural products face on the international market and be subject to the rigours of international trading rules and regulations. Among the challenges for the region were production and productivity, economies of scale, financing and entry barriers to the markets that the region would wish to enter.

7.1.3. Positioning for Economic Benefits and Financial Independence

How does the Caribbean - small island developing states that have suffered the full scale brunt of the criminalization of marijuana - now position itself to reap economic benefits and independence from a crop which has gained acceptance in a growing global market?

- **Legalization with a Regulated Market:** Dr. Fletcher proposed legalization with a regulated market. The market should not be open and free to all because of the downsides/negative consequences, particularly the health considerations with respect to children, youth and individuals with adverse reactions.
- **Benefits to *Small Man*:** Any move to facilitate the development of any product - whether by decriminalization or by legalization - must benefit the small man, the small farmers and the persons who have borne the burden of persecution during the criminalization phase of marijuana. Small growers and others needed to come together in order to protect the opportunity that they and others had fought for.
- **Producer Associations:** The situation that would be facing the marijuana small farmers with legalization was compared with the situation of small nutmeg and cocoa farmers where associations had to be formed so that the small producers who sold small quantities (e.g. 10 lbs. to 50 lbs.) could benefit from the same price as the large estate owner who sold 5,000 lbs.
- **Lessons from the GCNA/GCA:** Although cocoa and nutmegs did not have to contend with a negative status, from an institutional point of view, Grenada could learn some lessons about the development of a business organisation/association that sought to protect the small producer and allowed the small producer to benefit from an enterprise in a multi-billion dollar global business.
- **What Kind of Business Model:** The business model for marijuana/ganja business must fulfill the objective of ensuring a secure/stable income for persons along the value chain in the ganja business. The business model could fail notwithstanding the existence of legal infrastructure. Comparison was made with the banana industry which collapsed in the region because of the change of rules of entry in the European market, conditions which the banana-producing countries were unable to meet and therefore had to get out of banana exports.

- **Branding/Differentiation and Value Added:** The region must consider its entry into the market, not as exporters of raw commodities but with value added products. It must create clusters along the value chain for efficiency and economic gain. Production of cannabis oil was still a basic process. How could the products from the region, Grenada for example, be differentiated/branded so that there was something unique and special about the product, making it more attractive on the international market.

7.1.4. Ganjanomics

Dr. Fletcher concluded his presentation by noting that one had to look at the economics of the ganja industry, *Ganjanomics*, and reiterated as follows:-

- **Financial Component:** There is a financial component to any business model.
- **Barriers to Entry:** The entry of Grenada and the rest of the region into the global market for ganja is fraught with difficulties and problems, chief of which is the Financial Action Task Force regulations which address issues of money laundering, financing terrorism, know your client etc. While domestically, Grenada may wish to go the route of full legislation, internationally it will be difficult to trade.
- **Ganja Bank:** The region may have to consider setting up its own Ganja Bank which will facilitate the business transactions of the marijuana industry.

7.2. Respondent: *Mr. Kennedy Roberts, Health Economist. Lecturer in Public Health Policy and Management, SGU*

Mr. Roberts' presentation addressed the following:

- The content of the Commission's report
- Global trends
- Demand/supply for marijuana
- Social costs for society
- Basic economic issues that should be confronted now

7.2.1. Commission's Report:

Mr. Roberts commended the Report as being comprehensive and very detailed, addressing the historical, legal, social, medical and economic context. He recommended that it was important that the contents of the Report be well understood by government. The economic study commissioned for the Report stressed that marijuana/ganja was a very lucrative industry.

7.2.1.1. Potential Benefits and Costs of Marijuana Use

The economic study identified the following potential benefits and costs of the use of marijuana.

- **Costs re the Legal Regime:** Among the costs to the society in respect of the current legal regime which deemed marijuana a dangerous drug were the following:- loss of income, production and productivity as a result of arrests;

- **Police Resources:** the costs of the resources used by police which could be spent on other aspects of policing;
- **Prisons:** Costs to the prison system;
- **Revenue Loss:** Loss of revenue from licences/fees and taxes
- **Other Societal Costs:**
 - families and community relations with the police
 - Costs of treatment to persons who were negatively impacted, including children and youth
 - Costs as a result of accidents

7.2.1.2. Conclusion of Economic Study

- **Savings/Revenues:** The economic study concluded that savings and additional revenues could be significant depending on the model of legalization applied. Costs would vary according to country and model. The legalization models identified were:-
 - Decriminalization
 - Full legalization, i.e. sale and use of marijuana with state control
 - Full legalization within a competitive market framework
- **Costs/Benefits:** The decriminalization model had the lowest costs but also the lowest benefits while the full legalization models had both the highest costs and benefits.

7.2.2. Global Trends

- **Declassification of Marijuana:** In December 2020, marijuana was declassified as a *dangerous drug* by the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs which removed cannabis from Schedule IV of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, clearing the way for changing the legal regime in respect of marijuana - decriminalization and full legalization.

7.2.3. Demand/Supply for Marijuana

7.2.3.1. Transactional Costs and Societal Costs

Associated with supply of and demand for marijuana were transactional costs and societal costs.

- **Supply:** The costs of supplying marijuana were its direct production costs (seeds, land, wages etc.), distribution costs and indirect costs.
 - **High Indirect Costs of Supply:** Currently, the high indirect costs in respect of supplying marijuana were linked to the risks associated with arrests/ prosecution and exposure to violence, given the illegal nature of marijuana. This contributed to a high price for the product. Legalization would result in the following:-
 - **Removal of Indirect Costs:** If marijuana were to be legalized, the high indirect costs would be removed, thus reducing the price of the product.

- **Generation of Revenue and Regulation:** Government revenue would be generated via taxes and production and distribution could be controlled.
- **Demand:** In addition to the acquisition costs, i.e. price, there were indirect costs associated with the demand for marijuana. The individual purchasing marijuana was also subject to risks of arrest/prosecution and exposure to violence.
- **Societal Costs:** The indirect costs of supply and demand translated into societal costs which should be considered in addressing the issue of marijuana. Among these were:-
 - **Law Enforcement:** In addition to diverting resources away from other aspects of policing, sometimes incidents of police shootings/killings occurred with a negative impact on families and police-community relations.
 - **Costs to Legal system:** These costs included costs re the judicial and prison system.

Impact on Families and Societies: There was the mental anguish suffered by families and the behavioural disorders and other negative consequences with which society had to contend, the result of adverse impacts of marijuana use on some individuals.

 - **Medical Costs:** This was the cost of medical treatment as a result of the adverse consequence of marijuana use on some individuals.
 - **Long Term Impact on Children and Youth:** There could be negative consequences on children and youth. In addition to regulations which control access to marijuana by children and youth, there should be the provision of alternatives in schools and communities, i.e. positive activities, that would divert them from being attracted to marijuana.

7.2.3.2. Economic Implications

- **Banking Challenges:** Banks would not facilitate transactions given the FATF regulations that would consider these transactions as money laundering.
- **Loss of Foreign Exchange:** Rough estimates suggested that about 10,000 persons of Grenada's population smoke regularly and spent about XCD200 monthly on marijuana. This translated into lost foreign exchange on imported marijuana, the equivalent of approximately XCD24 million annually that could be satisfied by local production.

7.2.3.3. Conclusions/Recommendations

- **Impact of Marijuana Use:** The impact of marijuana use could be compared to that of alcohol and tobacco. Hence, regulations could be put in place with respect to the sale and use of marijuana. E.g. could not be sold to minors; no smoking in public places.
- **Medical Importance of Marijuana:** The medicinal value of marijuana has been acknowledged.

- **Greater Burden Borne by Lower Income Levels:** People in poverty tended to smoke more and bore a greater burden of the costs of being incarcerated for smoking marijuana.
- **Expunging Criminal Records:** It was appropriate to remove the criminal records of persons who, in the past, were considered offenders as a result of their use of marijuana.
- **Historical Oppression of Users:** We must recognize the historical oppression of users, particularly groups like the Rastafarians. In Antigua, the government of Antigua had offered an apology to the its Rastafarian community. It was time to “step up” and acknowledge these historic injustices.
- **Protect Children:** Measures must be put in place to protect children.
- **Linking Marijuana/Community Tourism:** The greatest economic impact for Grenada could come from linking marijuana to the tourism industry in a very structured way. Not all visitors desired high-rise 1,000-room facilities. They wanted the real community experiences which could include recreational smoking.
- **Marijuana, Part of An Agricultural System:** Marijuana could be cultivated with other crops as is done in St. Vincent and the Grenadines where it was intercropped with food crops, contributing to food security.
- **Involve Traditional Farmers:** Traditional farmers must be involved.
- **Education and Consultation:** There must be education and consultation to go forward.
- **Non Partisan:** There must be serious political will and the matter must not be used as partisan, political tool.
- **Removal of Stigma:** The time had come to decriminalize marijuana and work towards full legislation for the benefit of Grenada. It was time to remove the stigma and become producers of top quality ganja.

7.3. Respondent: *Dr. Patrick Antoine, Economist, Grenada’s Former Ambassador to CARICOM*

Dr. Antoine thanked the organisers for the invitation to be part of the discussion, noting his familiarity with the Report given that he was serving as Grenada’s Ambassador to CARICOM during the period that the Commission had conducted its work, had the opportunity to review the studies of the Report and had also attended the Heads of Government meeting which accepted the Report in July 2018. Subsequently, he had also done work in the region on the subject. He noted that marijuana was now a topical issue on the regional and international agenda. The following is a summary of Dr. Antoine’s contribution.

7.3.1. International Context

- **Declassification:** The United Nations Convention declassification of marijuana as a dangerous drug was merely symbolic.
- **Access to International Markets:** Declassification did not give the small island developing states access to international markets which was the objective for economic

impact. In respect of the Caribbean, some of the small island states had a reputation either because they have produced marijuana for a long time or because they had marijuana strains that were in high demand.

- **Marijuana Markets:** Canada, United States and Europe were the big markets. There were also emerging markets, comprised of countries with large land masses, large resources and large technology bases compared to the Caribbean islands which were small countries with small land masses and a limited technology base.
- **Small Farmer Niche Market:** Dr. Antoine observed that former President of the United States, Barack Obama, had advised that connecting to global markets was opening the door to Big Pharma. The former President had recommended that small islands wanting to “develop the marijuana space” should focus on a small farmer type of niche industry that persons would visit to enjoy, to heal, to recreate from what the small state was able to produce
- **Challenges re Cross Border Trade:** Challenges for small states re cross border trade were not expected to go away anytime soon. It remained a challenge to move marijuana across borders to countries where it was no longer illicit. At the federal level of the USA, it was still prohibited and not easily tradable across state borders.

7.3.2. Which Business Model/Legal Regime?

- **Classification of Marijuana:** The classification of marijuana – whether it has been decriminalized or permitted for recreational use - would have implications for the model that would be pursued.
- **Social Justice Outcome:** There were hybrid models along the spectrum to achieve the outcome of social justice by removing the oppressive and discriminatory nature of the existing laws.
- **Classification Spectrum/Continuum:** Jamaica had moved furthest along the decriminalization spectrum. St. Vincent and the Grenadines had “wisely adopted “ a model of de-penalization.
- **De-penalization:** In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, there was a de-penalizing model which issued tickets to “offenders” for quantities above a certain critical limit rather than arrest, charge and incarceration. There was no criminal record.
- **Lessons for Grenada in SVG Model:** There were lessons for Grenada in the model adopted by St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
- **Types/Performance of Investment Models:** There were three types of investment based on legislation:-
 - **“Pump and Dump” Model:** Private Equity and Publicly Traded Companies have not worked out well. They have pumped their stocks and bonds into countries like Jamaica, St. Vincent and Colombia. As soon as they “pumped” their stocks, they have sold out at a higher price, getting individual benefits while the country was no better off in respect of investment in the marijuana sector.

- St. Vincent and the Grenadines got 150 investors and ended up with eight(8), of whom 3 could be considered serious investors and were also from the region.
- **Small Capital, Small Farmers and Joint Venture:** This was the model that seems to have worked the best both in St. Vincent and in Jamaica.
- **Loan Capital:** There was also loan capital from doctors, medical schools, universities etc. These appeared to work better in North American markets and Europe. These funds had not performed in Jamaica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

7.3.2.1. Licensing

- The structure of the licence and who got the licence would determine the economic benefits that would accrue to the country from the industry.
- **Jamaica:**
 - **Large Entities:** In Jamaica, licences were mostly given to large entities. The pricing points excluded small farmers.
 - **Tiers of Licences:** Licences were segregated. There were five or six tiers of licences in Jamaica. Each licence was different.
 - **Small Farmers Ended Up Worse Off:** Small producers were duped into believing that the new regime would bring tremendous benefits. They invested all they had and ended up worse off than before.
- **St. Vincent and the Grenadines:**
 - **Amnesty Clause:** In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the legislation grandfathered small farmers. It used an amnesty clause to allow the small farmers' production on the ground to be turned into oil so that there was not any gap in respect of income to small farmers. They could continue to produce and trade.
 - **Traditional/Vertically Integrated Licence:** The grandfather provisions in respect of the small producers also provided for them to obtain a traditional licence which was vertically integrated. Small farmers could produce, manufacture, distribute, dispense at the retail level
 - **New Investments:** St. Vincent and the Grenadines was not getting the benefits from the new wave of investment as a result of the new legal regime to encourage investment.

7.3.3. Realizing Economic Potential

- **Not a Silver Bullet:** Marijuana was not the silver bullet that some persons have held it up to be in respect of being able to trade and “get rich quick”.
- **Caribbean Lagging:** The Caribbean was lagging with regard to trade in marijuana. There would be a lapse between the consultation process and the legislative process which would change the status of marijuana as an illicit substance. It had taken about

three (3) years for countries that have moved the quickest. In Jamaica, this process took about five (5) years.

- **Economic Performance Disappointing:** Jamaica’s economic performance has been disappointing for many. The envisaged growth and returns from investment in the marijuana industry has not been realized. St. Vincent and the Grenadines, has not yet seen any return from the new wave of investment in response to the legislation put in place.
- **Research:** While the popular sentiment seemed to be that more research was required, a lot of research on the marijuana industry had already been undertaken by multi-national companies e.g. in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
- **Seeds:** Producers in Jamaica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines were importing hybrid, high performance seeds from seed companies in the US. There was a need for caution in this regard. The big companies and Big Pharma could “out the lights” of producers in the region.
- **Product Research:** Research was required in respect of marijuana by products, fusion products; niche products and psychedelics. There was a growing psychedelics industry in countries that were promised growth and development with marijuana but this had not been delivered.
- **Health and Wellness Niche Markets:** Psychedelics were part of the growing health and wellness niche market.
- **Training Specialist Workers:** Specialist skills were needed in the cannabis industry. Thus, what has emerged in marijuana industry in a number of developing countries is that specialist workers were being trained to work in the cannabis industry in North American markets.
 - Persons from St. Vincent and the Grenadines and other countries were being trained and certified to work in marijuana industry.
- **Participation of Youth Population:** The licences and industry must be structured to facilitate youth participation and innovation. Training would also facilitate youth participation.

7.3.4. The Way Forward

Dr. Antoine offered the following observations and recommendations as Grenada contemplated the future with a marijuana industry:-

- **Commodity:** Marijuana had become a commodity. It was one of the opportunities available if Grenada worked well and did the required research.
- **Regulatory Body:** A regulatory body should be put in place supported by adequate facilities for testing and tracing.
- **Creating an Economic Sector:** Creating an economic sector called for a lot of focus and thinking to ensure that the right structure was created - a structure that would benefit small farmers and the country as whole. While social justice would be achieved

by decriminalization, if Grenada did not put “the pieces” in place and did not perform better than it has done with a number of other things in agriculture, it would not reap any economic benefits.

- **Reality Check:**

- **Glut in North American Markets:** There was already a glut in production in the markets of the USA and Canada.
- **Political Climate in the USA:** The political climate in the USA would not permit the removal of marijuana from the list substances that was unable to be traded across border lines.
- **European Countries Expanding Production:** European countries were expanding production and wanted to purchase raw material from the region, produce value-added products and export back to the region. A number of these products were already in the CARICOM market even though most CARICOM countries had not legalized marijuana.
- **Correspondent Banking:** The world was not going to be opened any time soon to accept inflows from marijuana into the banking sector. Currently, that was one of Jamaica’s biggest challenges. St. Vincent and the Grenadines were now beginning to face that challenge. The proceeds of marijuana could not be banked. In Jamaica, the transactions of its large informal sector had brought some relief in that regard since the proceeds were unable to be tracked. The region’s banking system was very fragile and the role of the informal sector might have to be considered in this regard.
- **Marijuana Rainbow:** While the development of a marijuana sector was a great opportunity for small farming community, great ideas with great prospects had to be embraced properly and with a dose of reality. As the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, had cautioned, *there was no “pot of gold at the end of the “marijuana rainbow”¹⁴.*

7.4. Plenary: Questions/Observations/Comments

7.4.1. From Dangerous Drug to Commodity

The moderator noted that Dr. Antoine had inserted a significant consideration in the discussion - marijuana was now a commodity. This therefore required a whole new level and approach when engaged in trade, particularly the issue of market knowledge of the commodity.

¹⁴ <https://searchlight.vc/searchlight/front-page/2018/05/15/pm-gonsalves-cautions-against-over-optimism-about-medicinal-marijuana-industry/>

7.4.2. Observations by Dr. Fletcher

Dr. Fletcher observed as follows:

- **Challenges Faced by Commodities:** Dr. Fletcher shared Dr. Antoine’s view that exuberance/expectations in respect of the economic returns from marijuana should be tempered. As a commodity, it would face the same challenges as the traditional exports - bananas, nutmegs and cocoa.
- **Declining Demand in Global Markets:** Demand for marijuana in global markets had stabilized, even declined in some markets. All products faced a lifecycle – introduction, growth, plateau and decline.
- **Market Knowledge:** Constant monitoring of the international markets was required.
- **Domestic Market:** What was the extent of the domestic market for the (marijuana) products that Grenada might wish to produce? Dr. Fletcher was of the view that the domestic market would show a similar trend to the markets for other commodities. The returns to investment from the domestic market might be considered inadequate.
- **Barriers to Entry:** Small islands faced significant challenges re their insertion into the international value chain though they were encouraged to do so by many international organizations. Among those challenges were technical and non-technical barriers.
- **Producer Associations of Small Farmers/Regulations:** International trade in this new commodity should be approached from a perspective of producer associations of small farmers and regulations.

7.4.3. Observations/Queries, Mr. Syisha Williams

- **Focus on Smoking Marijuana:** The panellists seemed to have focused only on smoking. There were different strains of marijuana. The female plant was the one that was smoked.
- **Wholistic Approach to Legalization:** A wholistic approach to legalizing cannabis in Grenada was required, not decriminalizing/de-penalizing.
- **Legalizing the Plant:** In the context of the history of how marijuana was made illegal, how could the plant be legalized in a manner that would protect our people now and in the future?
- **Disservice:** It was a disservice to the process by starting with decriminalization/de-penalization. This sounded like gimmicks.
- **Position of Fear:** Discussion and decisions appeared to be framed from a position of fear - e.g. markets will plateau and shrink. This fear was coming from a “smoke” perspective, the female plant. It was not referring to the markets for textiles, pharmaceuticals/nutraceuticals. These were the opportunities that would help Grenada to find a niche and to be able to prosper from a marijuana economy. In order to take advantage of these opportunities, the plant had to be legalized. Research was required but research could not be undertaken if the plant was quasi-illegal.

- **Breaking the Cycle of Fear:** We must undertake research, understand the pros and cons and make decisions to embrace the positives. Decisions should not be made from a position of fear of the negatives that might happen. Research would have been undertaken prior and we would know how to deal with the negatives, if and when they arose.
- **Position of Confidence:** Was there a way to start the conversation on marijuana from a position of confidence rather than from a position of fear?

7.4.4. Observations, Ms. Denyse Ogilvie

- **What We Need to Know:** Ms. Ogilvie applauded Dr. Antoine on his presentation noting “This is what we need to know! This is where we need to go!”.
- **Traditional Licence:** The traditional licence granted to small traditional marijuana farmers in St. Vincent and the Grenadines enabled them to create and sell products themselves. She contrasted that situation to the general situation with agro-processing where the growers received very little return for supplying raw material.
- **Ownership of the Economy:** She compared the possibility offered by the traditional licence to the local Farmers’ Market - (in Illinois) where she was located – where she could purchase homemade salves for arthritis. The traditional licence offered an opportunity to a free people, in a free economy to do and own for themselves.
- **Marijuana and Community Tourism:** Ms. Ogilvie also supported the recommendations of Mr. Kennedy Roberts that marijuana be linked to community tourism. She observed that this link already existed and should be permitted to operate without stigma.
- **Domestic Market:** The domestic market was the place to start.

7.5. Response

7.5.1. Response by Mr. Kennedy Roberts

- Marijuana had been perceived negatively over a long period. A number of persons were still not comfortable speaking about marijuana and the negative voices tended to be the loudest.
- However, the world was recognizing the benefits of marijuana. Things were changing and people were becoming aware of the history of the criminalization of marijuana.
- Grenada was lagging behind and the conversation should be speeded up. However, the change had to be phased. The first action should address the harassment of persons who use small quantities of marijuana and thus put an end to the mental stress around marijuana. What were the specific things to be put in the legislation now to end that mental stress around the issue of the use/possession of small quantities of marijuana?

7.5.2. Response by Dr. Patrick Antoine

- **Hypocritical:** Dr. Antoine displayed marijuana products that were available in Trinidad and Tobago - CVC9 crème; cannabis oil; cannabis body lotion. He admitted that it was hypocritical that European cannabis products could be found in CARICOM countries but if CARICOM countries were to speak about legalization, banks would be “turning off our lights tomorrow”.
- **Oppressive and Discriminatory:** Thus, being cautious in the approach to the legalization of marijuana was not a position of fear but the reality of small countries being connected to an international finance system that they did not control. The international trading and finance system was oppressive and discriminatory. The small countries had to learn to work between the spaces allowed by that oppressive and discriminatory system.
- **International Spaces:** The international laws permitted regimes for marijuana research and medical marijuana.
- **Value Added Product:** The region/Grenada certainly could not compete with other countries in respect of the marijuana commodity. Therefore, value added products must be considered.
- **Phased Approach:** Among the elements in a first approach would be the following:-
 - **Medicinal Marijuana:** Craft legislation for medicinal marijuana whose use would be regulated and would require a doctor’s prescription.
 - **Use by Youth:** Protect youth by requiring parental consent or a doctor’s prescription to access marijuana.
 - **Use by Rastafarians:** Grandfather Rastafarians in legislation; their properties, tabernacles, farms should be designated places where marijuana could be used for spiritual purposes and not be deemed as using marijuana on the street.
 - **Formulations:** Research formulations; use in food products, e.g. marijuana cookies; combine with other products.
 - **Step Wise:** Getting to the ultimate destination of realizing prosperity from a thriving marijuana industry had to be done in a step wise manner to prevent being shut off from the international system.

8. Response to Report: Decriminalization, Legalization, Law and Human Rights

This panel was moderated by retired Justice Rita Joseph-Olivetti.

8.1 Respondent, *Mr. Richie Maitland, Attorney-at-Law, Human Rights Specialisation*

The following summarizes Mr. Maitland’s contribution.

8.1.1. Observations re Commission's Report

- **CARICOM Commission:** The CARICOM Commission was comprised of a large number of persons of diverse backgrounds who were experts in their specific fields.
- **Decriminalization:** Based on its research findings, the Commission looked at a number of scenarios and recommended decriminalization.
- **Specific Recommendations:** The report was specific in identifying what had to be done. A lot of “leg work” had already been done.
- **Commitment to Action on the Report:** Mr. Maitland observed that, to the best of his knowledge, Grenada was the only country that had not made specific political commitments in respect of legislation. Other countries in the region had made some level of commitment. Among those were:-
 - Barbados had recently committed to decriminalizing marijuana by 2022.
 - Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua-Barbuda had passed legislation.
 - In St. Kitts-Nevis, the matter was addressed via the court. A successful challenge was brought before the High Court by a Rastafarian.

8.1.2. Support for Change

- **Get on with It:** While it was important to exercise caution in addressing the issue of decriminalization/legalization of marijuana, the process could “drag on forever” and Grenada was already the last in the region to be addressing the issue. Grenada ought to “get on” with taking action in line with the recommendations of the Report.
- **Majority Support for Decriminalization in Grenada:** In Grenada, there was majority support for decriminalization. The Commission's Report referenced a 2018 poll done in Grenada on behalf of the Commission which showed that 61 percent of persons polled were in favour of the removal of prohibition regime compared with 22 percent who voted in favour of retaining the status quo.
- **Support of Regional Law Enforcement:** He expressed surprise that the Report revealed overwhelming support from law enforcement in the region for the decriminalization of marijuana
 - **Time Spent:** Law enforcement in respect of marijuana took up a lot of time relative to what was achieved.
 - **Absence of Link re Marijuana and Violent Crime:** There was no correlation between marijuana and crime, particularly violent crime.
 - **Illegality and Violence:** Mr. Maitland remarked that globally, where violence existed e.g. gang violence in the context of drugs, that violence was driven by the illegality of the substance. Being deprived of the possibility of solving disputes before the court, people sometimes took matters in their own hands, resulting in violence.

- **Impact on Law Enforcement on Poor Communities:** Poorer communities suffered more in terms of law enforcement. However, it was not these communities used more drugs. For historical reasons (of discrimination and oppression) law enforcement was more likely to raid a poor block than raid an affluent area.
- **Over-Policing the Under-privileged:** Law enforcement recognized it as “over policing” already underprivileged people.
- **Financial Status and Incarceration:** Where poor persons could not afford to pay fines for marijuana, they were incarcerated unlike more affluent persons who were able to pay the fine. The Report referenced statistics from St. Vincent and the Grenadines where 70 percent of the prison population were in prison because they could not afford to pay the fine.
- **Disproportionately Negative Impact on Poor:** The poor were disproportionately affected negatively, suffering more from the enforcement of the law that criminalized marijuana.
- **Challenge to Law in St. Kitts-Nevis:** A Rastafarian in St. Kitts-Nevis was charged for possession and cultivation under the prohibition regime. He challenged the law as violating his religious rights as a Rastafarian. The High Court ruled in his favour and gave the government of St. Kitts-Nevis a number of days to amend the legislation.
- **Precedents Set:** Precedents have already been set. there were laws that could be drawn upon and tweaked to give effect in Grenada. It was not as difficult as many people made it seem.

8.2. Respondent: *Mr. James Clarkson, Retired Commissioner of Police*

Mr. Clarkson shared that, in preparation for the National Round Table, he had been reflecting on two words, criminalization and legalization. He had also been reflecting on the many lives lost and many lives incarcerated, the young men who were put in prison by the justice system. How could that cycle be broken? How could a path be found to a better world for the current and future generations? In order to understand the current situation and determine where we wanted to go as a country, we needed understand how we have arrived at the current situation and be aware of the many changes and narratives in the name of criminalization and legalization.

8.2.1. USA War on Drugs

Over the period 1995-1996, the Drug Enforcement Agency of the USA spearheaded intense law enforcement operations locally, regionally and internationally to prevent drugs from reaching US shores. In the Caribbean region, the focus was on marijuana. The region’s law enforcement services, including the Regional Security Service, were co-opted into the operations of the DEA. Locally, a lot of manpower was utilized with minimal return – the confiscation of few plants and the arrest of one or two persons. Regionally, the results mirrored that of the local level.

Internationally, the US exerted pressure on the Cali leadership using the members of the Colombian national police. All the top drug trafficking leaders from the Cali group were jailed or killed. Law enforcement also attacked the Colombian cells operating within the USA. These operations did not break the back of the drug traffickers. Rather, it emboldened them. An alliance was formed between the Colombian and the Mexican drug traffickers. In Sept 1999, the DEA announced the conclusion of a two-year investigation resulting in 37 seizures of a significant quantity of drugs, USD19 million in cash and the arrest of over 106 persons including a head of state in Panama.

8.2.1.1. Changes in the USA

Changes occurred in the states in the USA and affected the small island states of the region and their involvement in law enforcement against drugs. There was the legalization of marijuana in some states, drug shops were opened and licences were given to these shops. In the region, law enforcement began looking inward, to prevent drugs from going to the USA. The drugs remained on island and became a problem for local law enforcement.

8.2.2. Decriminalization/Legalization

There were various schools of thought on drugs and criminalization/legalization. One must look at both sides and all angles – policy, laws and enforcement. Among the positions were the following:-

- Its use had a negative impact on the user and on society.
- Was criminalizing drug use the most effective way of dealing with the problem, if there was ever a problem.
- Some advocated for legalization but drew a distinction between the types of drugs.
- Legalization was required in order to break the grip on criminal gangs and protect young people.
- Criminalizing drugs offered a better chance of overcoming addiction.
- The use of drugs should be regulated through legalization

8.2.3. Legalization /Opportunities for Business

- Drugs have become a million dollar business and “drug pushers” had become very rich. Individuals in drug world were billionaires. In the USA, a deal between a drug pusher who was sentenced and the prison authorities saw the drug pusher building his own luxury jail, protected by prison authorities, and continuing to enjoy his luxury lifestyle. Then one day, he “broke jail”. The authorities searched for him and killed him. What was the benefit to society of his death?
- Legalization would facilitate businesses and attract taxation. resulting in revenues to the government. Depending on level of taxation, there would be a black market for marijuana and other drugs. Drug tourism could also become a problem.

8.2.4. Culture and Customs

The retired Commissioner noted that our customs and culture must not be forgotten. He drew from examples from growing up with his grandmother. There was a business in the community known as the *drug shop*, now called a pharmacy but it was very rarely patronized. For every sickness, there was a bush/herb from the garden that could be applied to healing the condition.

8.2.5. Law Enforcement

- **Rule of Law:** Laws which are not enforced properly create problems. It is not merely about making a statement. He drew reference to a recent statement made by a high level political personality which advised police officers that if they found a man smoking a *spliff*, they should leave him alone. It was not that easy. The necessary amendments had to be made to get that particular law off the law books.
- **Discrimination:** Did a law enforcement officer discriminate in the enforcement of the law? Would he ignore his cousin who has a spliff but arrest someone who is not a relative?
- **Making a Community/Country Safe:** How could the country/community be made safe? E.g. driving under the influence. Tests were not available for testing cannabis so recognition experts would be required. Curbing the demand for drugs required smart drug prevention policies. Could medical marijuana increase the use of and addiction to marijuana? The issues must be analyzed and correct decisions made.

8.3. Respondent: *Elder Nang Nang, Rastafarian Community*

Elder Nang thanked the organisers of the National Round Table for the opportunity to be part of the discussion. He noted that Rastafarians hardly get any opportunity to defend their cause or sit on committees and “*reason on things pertaining to their affairs, particularly ganja*”.

Marijuana was used as a burnt sacrament in the Rastafarian faith. It was used for specific reasons. For many years, members of the Rastafarian community have been brutalized and marginalized for marijuana use. Rastas have been “through hell”. He was pleased that the people and the government have become conscious of the benefits of marijuana. Elder Nang shared the following information and thoughts:-

- **Uses of Marijuana:** In 1920, Henry Forde took marijuana and made the body of a car. In 2021, marijuana was being used to make about 5, 600 different products – paint, varnish, Plaster of Paris, rope textiles, sails for yacht, various food products etc.
- **Special Plant:** Those who smoked marijuana, including those who were not Rastafarians, know marijuana was a special plant. It was the *holy herb*, healing and food that the Almighty gave to man.
- **War:** Countries have gone to war over marijuana. E.g. Russia and France went to war over marijuana.

- **Supply of Marijuana:** In the Caribbean, even in Grenada, cocaine appeared to be more widely available than marijuana. Cocaine was imported but marijuana could be grown in Grenada.
- **Address Poverty:** Marijuana, if legal, could take people out of poverty. It had economic potential. There were many uses of marijuana other than smoking.
- **Moratorium on Arrests:** Elder Nang requested that a moratorium be declared re the arrest of persons for ganja.
- **Forgiveness by the Rastafarian Community:** Rastafarians had forgiven those who persecuted them. Rastafarians died, they were imprisoned and suffered great loss over the use of marijuana. Their families went astray. But they did not hold grudges against anyone.
- **Impact of Smoking Marijuana:** Rastas did not carry hatred. Smoking marijuana helped one to cope. Marijuana could heal the nation from its mental problems/stresses. It could “cast out demons and devils”.
- **Chinese and Ganja:** The Chinese, who were now in Grenada, knew about making rope and paper from ganja. Marijuana could be used to make various food products and medicinal products.
- **Foreign Exchange:** Grenada was losing foreign exchange over the import of ganja. There was potential for ganja in the tourism industry.
- **Establish Marijuana Industry:** There were many opportunities for Grenada to establish a marijuana industry. It was time to take advantage of this opportunity. Grenada had become a consumer nation, producing very little.
- **Grenada Revolution 1979:** Shortly after the Revolution which took place on March 13th, 1979, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop held a meeting with the Rastafarian community and advised them that each individual would be permitted to cultivate 14 trees. Within a couple weeks, some “radicals” reneged on that arrangement and Rastafarians were arrested, even for the possession of one spliff. During the Revolution, many Rastas were put in detention in the Hope Vale detention camp. He hoped that this time, Rastas would not be disappointed.

8.4. Respondent: *Ms. Glenda Mason-Francis, Retired Educator*

Ms. Mason-Francis shared the following:-

- **Concern about Young People:** As a lifelong educator, she was concerned about the young people of Grenada who were being groomed to become the nation’s future leaders.
- **Exposure to Marijuana:** Growing up in Grenada, she was not aware of marijuana. It was while attending University at Mona, Jamaica, she was first exposed to marijuana in 1961. On campus, she met Rastafarians who visited the campus regularly. On weekends, she danced to the music of the Rastafarians.
- **About Marijuana:** Up to now, she knew very little about marijuana.

- **Opposed to Legalization:** She had always been opposed to the legalization of marijuana, based on the adverse consequences it has had on her students who used it:-
 - a Form 6 student who was being groomed to be Island Scholar started using marijuana and dropped out of school on his first day in Form 6;
 - Boys in lower forms who dropped out of school;
 - A girl who almost became a vagrant;
- **Personal Interest:** She had held the opinion that those who were advocating for the legalization of marijuana were pursuing personal, monetary interest because they would be able to take advantage of the economic opportunity offered by legalization.
- **Rethinking Her Position:** She was rethinking her position. There must be conversations about marijuana - both young and old needed information and education about the benefits and dangers of marijuana.
- **Experiences of Other Countries:** What have been the experiences of countries which legalized marijuana, the upsides and down sides? Were these countries better off?
- **Traditional Use of Herbs/Bush:** She referenced the following from the Report of the Commission, *“Traditionally Caribbean citizens have promoted the use of medicinal properties of Marijuana and this was confirmed by scientific evidence”*. Though she grew up with grandparents and older family, she had never heard them mention marijuana. Nonetheless, her family used herbs/bush to treat a number of ailments.
- **Education and Inclusive Discussions:** Ms. Mason-Francis concluded her presentation by reiterating the need for island-wide education and inclusive discussions. She also recommended that the discussions and the education programme be devoid of political influence.

8.5. Plenary: Questions/Comments/Observations

- **Ras Nang:**
 - **Rastafarian Sacrament:** Elder Nang requested that marijuana be considered part of the Rastafarian sacrament and that the persecution of Rastafarians be ended. He advised that 13 tabernacles had been destroyed in Grenada by the Police and Special Services Unit over marijuana.
- **Cheryl “Lady Cheryl” Antoine**
 - **A Drug:** Why was marijuana referred to as drug? It was only a drug when it used by medical people. Marijuana was a herb, a plant/tree.
 - **Law Enforcement:**
 - **US War on Drugs:** How was Grenada’s law enforcement rewarded for protecting the interest of the USA?
 - **Abuse of Young People:** She was aware of the abuse of young people by law enforcement officials.

- **Son in Prison:** Her son was brutalized by the police and incarcerated in prison for planting marijuana. Was this at the instructions of the USA?
 - **Causing Mental Illness:** Marijuana did not make people mad. Rastas were positive when they smoked a spliff. In her community, Rastafarians were very private people when they wanted to smoke a spliff unlike men who sat by the side of the road drinking rum and smoking tobacco.
 - **Opportunities to Cultivate Marijuana:** She hoped that when marijuana was legalized, those who have been persecuted for marijuana would have economic opportunities. There were persons leaving Grenada to go to Canada to work on marijuana farms.
- **Ritchie Ollivierre:**
 - **Availability and Access to Adequate Health Care:** He had listened to persons speak in glowing terms of the benefits of the marijuana plant. But there were some persons who smoked just once and had a negative experience. Did Grenada have the facilities/expertise to deal with those who use it once and have negative consequences? Was the Caribbean and the OECS/Grenada ready to deal with the possibility of increased usage if marijuana is legalized?
- **Ras Baptiste:**
 - **Negative Impact of Legal Regime on Mental Health:** The present law on marijuana was destroying our citizens. The mental stress associated with marijuana came from the mental stress associated with it being illegal, the result of pressure from America. Ras Baptiste recommended that Grenada should go forward with changing the legal regime in respect of marijuana.
- **Ras Man I, House of Nyabingi:**
 - Marijuana has been around for a long time.
 - Rastafarians in Grenada have been pleading with the Government of Grenada for a long time to conduct a study to decriminalize marijuana. Why was the process taking so long? Why was the government taking so long in regards to the legalization of marijuana?
 - He referred to his friend who had pursued studies and research in Canada on marijuana cultivation. There were other persons in Grenada who had the skills and knowledge required for marijuana cultivation.
 - Just as any other businessman, the Rastas and other people interested in marijuana businesses were ready to take advantage of any opportunities that became available.
- **Denyse Ogilvie:**
 - **Mental Illness:** Mental illness occurred in spite of marijuana.
 - **Education and Knowledge:** Education and knowledge about marijuana were required.

- **Ongoing Research:** Ongoing research was also required to be aware of what was going on in the world and to be aware of how the region/Grenada was positioned. The expectation of big bucks had not been realized in a number of countries which started off with these expectations.
- **Equitable System:** A just and equitable system was wanted for something that could be profitable.
- **Empress Mutaro Nyabingi House, Rastafarian Organisation for Centralization:**
 - Empress Mutaro addressed her query to Mr. Maitland. Why was Grenada one of the last countries to have the consultations? Was it that the Government did not recognize Rastafarians' connection to marijuana?

8.5.1. Response, Mr. Maitland

In response to Empress Mutaro, Mr. Maitland opined that it was a matter of legislation and political commitment. By and large the other governments in the region have felt the mood of their people and understand that the world was changing. Possibly, Grenadian politicians had not yet arrived at that reality. There was also a powerful, politically active church lobby which held an anti-marijuana position.

9. Summary of Take-Aways

Mr. Lester Andall presented the summary of take-aways for the afternoon session.

9.1. Economic Panel

The following were presented as the key take-aways from the Economic Panel:-

- **Commodity Perspective:** There was a shift in perspective from marijuana being a *dangerous drug* to marijuana being a commodity. What were the implications of trading in this agricultural commodity?
- **Equity re Economic Prospects:** The prospects of the region in respect of realizing the lucrative economic potential of the marijuana industry were impacted by the actions of those who controlled the financial space.
- **Producers of Raw Materials:** Engaging in cultivation and export of marijuana commodity would not realize significant economic benefits for the region.
- **Social Costs of Marijuana:** The legal regime which treated marijuana as a *dangerous drug* created significant social costs for the country and life implications for persons who acquired criminal records as a result of being arrested and/or charged for use/possession of small amounts of marijuana. Decriminalization was the means of addressing the immediate and priority issue of the social costs to the country.
- **Significance of Marijuana to Various Stakeholders:** The significance of marijuana varied according to the stakeholder.
- **Transitioning Challenge:** Many persons want decriminalization. There were persons with real concerns based on life experiences. Their concerns should not be ignored.

- **Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement:** Broad stakeholder discussions and consultations needed to continue.

9.2. Decriminalization, Legalization, Law and Human Rights:

- Years ago, this type of discussion would not have taken place.
- Persons shared their various perspectives and experiences:-
 - A retired law enforcement officer shared how the issue was presented within the framework of policing.
 - Some 40 odd years ago, a promise was made to Rastafari community and then reneged upon; Rastas were incarcerated and endured much suffering and persecution for their use of marijuana.
 - Laws were made and changed, driven by how society progressed and changed when existing laws no longer fitted.
 - The issue of issue of human rights was also touched upon.
- The nation was losing its young men to the prison, incarcerated for marijuana; when they came out they were totally tutored for a different occupation.
- There were opportunities and concerns; persons shared real life experiences. The concerns have to be addressed.
- Open, frank discussions had to continue. How should Grenada proceed to bring the criminalization of marijuana to an end.

10. Wrap Up Remarks

- Bishop Clyde Harvey of the Conference of Churches in Grenada and Ms. Sandra Ferguson of the Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations offered wrap up remarks, thanking all those who had contributed to the hosting of a successful National Round Table.
- Ms. Ferguson noted that the day's activity was not a consultation. The intention of the National Round Table was to put the Report of the CARICOM Commission into the public domain and facilitate a discussion and understanding of the Report through the various panels. Via the National Round Table, information was now available to the public so that persons would have the opportunity to become more knowledgeable about the findings and recommendations of the Report. The day's activity was intended to contribute to informed engagement in the public consultations proposed by the Minister of Agriculture.

11. Summary of Key Issues and Recommendations

The following is a summary of the key issues and recommendations emerging from the presentation of the Commission's Report, the responses of the panels and the plenary discussions.

11.1. Stakeholder Engagement

- **People’s Issue:** The issue of the reform of the legal regime of marijuana was a non-political, non-partisan issue. The presentation of the Report of the CARICOM Commission had set the right tone for a national discussion.
- **Going Forward:**
 - **Extensive and Inclusive Discussions of the Report:** The Report should be disseminated widely. There was a need for extensive and inclusive discussions to ensure that everyone in society understood the information contained in the Report.
 - **Underlying Theme of Social Justice/Legal Reform:** The theme of social justice must be central to the discussion and actions going forward. Legal reform must address the inequalities/injustices experienced by the most vulnerable in society over the years.
 - **Transitioning Challenge:** Many persons wanted decriminalization. There were also persons with real concerns based on life experiences. Their concerns should not be ignored.
 - **Education and Information:** Education and knowledge about marijuana were required. Over decades, the negative perception of marijuana - a plant that historically held great spiritual, medicinal, cultural and social value to Caribbean people - was deliberately created by the legal regime which deemed it a *dangerous drug* complemented by the socializing influences of the church and the education systems. Currently, the negative perception focused on the female plant which was smoked. However, there were different strains of marijuana with various properties and uses upon which industry could be founded to create economic well-being.

11.2. Report of the CARICOM Commission:

- **Direction:** The Commission’s Report was described as “comprehensive, richly evidence-based and balanced. It gave direction as to how the CARICOM countries/Grenada should proceed in addressing the issue of reform of legal regime for marijuana.
 - **Reform of Legal Framework for Marijuana:** The legal framework for marijuana should be addressed from a human rights and public health perspective.
 - **Social Justice Priorities:** Social justice must remain the priority. The increasing interests in the medical ganja industry must not overtake social justice considerations.

11.3. Decriminalization/Legalization:

- **Dangerous Drug:** There was never a rational basis for criminalizing the use of marijuana. There was no rationale which justified the classification of marijuana as a “*dangerous drug*”. It was not anymore harmful than alcohol or tobacco.
 - **WHO Declassification:** In December 2020, WHO declassified marijuana as a dangerous drug.

- **Impact of the Legal Regime:**
 - **Societal Costs:** The legal regime which treated marijuana as a *dangerous drug* created significant social costs for the country and life implications for persons who acquired criminal records as a result of being arrested and/or charged for use/possession of small amounts of marijuana.
 - **Discriminatory:** The legal regime had a disproportionately higher negative impact on the persons in the poorer, vulnerable communities.
 - **Barriers to Economic Development and Scientific Research:** It also prevented the region from exploiting the economic potential of marijuana and hindered scientific research on marijuana.
- **Support for Decriminalization:**
 - **Social Costs/Social Justice issues:** Decriminalization was the means of addressing the immediate and priority issue of the social costs/social justice issues.
 - **Wide Spread Support:** There was widespread support throughout the CARICOM region, from persons of all walks of life, for the decriminalization of marijuana.
 - **Support in Grenada:** In 2018, a poll conducted in Grenada on behalf of the Commission revealed that 61 percent of the persons polled supported decriminalization.
 - **Support of Caribbean Law Enforcement:** Decriminalization was overwhelming supported by law enforcement throughout the region. There was no correlation between marijuana and crime, particularly violent crime and the law was discriminatory. Poor communities were over-policed and underprivileged.
- **Legalization with Regulation:** There should be legalization with regulations, similar to the regimes for alcohol and tobacco because of the downsides/negative consequences, particularly the health considerations with respect to children, youth and individuals with adverse reactions.

11.4. Health:

- **Equitable Access to Competent Care and Adequate Health Care Facilities:** A public health perspective must ensure availability and access to competent care and facilities by persons who experienced adverse consequences from the use of marijuana or any other substance such as alcohol. These experiences argued for a therapeutic response and access to quality care that could be accessed without barriers and the stigma of being treated for an illegal substance.
- **Children and Youth:** Notwithstanding the support for decriminalization, there must be regulations which control access to marijuana by children and youth and the provision of alternatives in schools and communities, i.e. positive activities, that would divert them from being attracted to marijuana.
- **Driving:** There should also be regulations in respect of the use of marijuana and driving, similar to that of alcohol.

11.5. Economic Potential:

- **Lucrative Potential:** The economic study commissioned by the CARICOM Commission indicated that the marijuana industry was a lucrative, global industry with significant economic potential for the Caribbean.
- **Commodity:** There was a shift in perspective from marijuana being a dangerous drug to marijuana being a commodity. Notwithstanding the huge export potential, marijuana, as an agricultural crop, would face the same challenges that all agricultural products - including Grenada's traditional exports, cocoa and nutmegs - face on the international market and be subject to the rigours of international trading rules and regulations.
- **Challenges to the Development of a Business Model/Legal Regime:** While marijuana was a lucrative industry globally, there were many challenges to the development of a business model that would adequately address the economic gains and returns from marijuana in respect of CARICOM states:-
 - **Classification of Marijuana:** The classification of marijuana – whether it has been decriminalized or permitted for recreational use - would have implications for the model that would be pursued.
 - **Legalization with a Regulated Market:** Legalization with a regulated market was proposed. The market should not be liberalized. It must also be supported by a competent, adequately resourced regulatory body.
 - **Banking Challenges:** The Caribbean was connected to an international finance system it did not control. How could the Caribbean overcome the banking challenges? The region's banking sector was “policed” by the Financial Action Task Force and the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force which still considered revenues from marijuana transactions
 - as “*the proceeds of illegal crime*”.
 - **Cross Border Trade:** Challenges for small states re cross border trade were not expected to go away anytime soon. It remained a challenge to move marijuana across borders to countries where it was no longer illicit. At the federal level of the USA, marijuana was still prohibited and not easily tradable across state borders.
- **Protecting the Interests of Small Farmers:** How were the interests of small farmers and those who have borne the burden of persecution during the criminalization phase of marijuana, to be protected? In Jamaica, large foreign corporations had taken over to the detriment of the traditional growers.
 - **Equitable Access to Resources:** There must be equitable access to resources to give opportunities to local growers and communities to participate in and benefit from the new economic opportunities that will arise.
 - **Producer Associations:** Small growers and others needed to come together in order to protect the opportunity that they and others had fought for. Producer

associations and clusters along the value chain were recommended. In Grenada there are the examples of the GCNA and the GCA.

- **Traditional, Vertically Integrated Licence:** The legislation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines made provisions for small, traditional producers to obtain a traditional licence which was vertically integrated. Small farmers could produce, manufacture, distribute, dispense at the retail level.
- **Branding/Differentiation and Value Added:** The region must consider its entry into the market, not as exporters of raw commodities but with differentiated/branded value-added products. This must be supported by continuous research and product development.
- **Niche Markets:** Niche markets must be identified.
- **Community Tourism:** Marijuana was already a part of community tourism in Grenada. The stigma of illegality should be removed.
- **Caution/Phased Approach:** Getting to the ultimate destination of realizing prosperity from a thriving marijuana industry required a phased approach, a step by step manner to prevent being shut off from the international system.
- **Marijuana Rainbow?** While the development of a marijuana sector was a great opportunity for small farming community, great ideas with great prospects had to be embraced properly and with a dose of reality. As the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, had cautioned, *there was no “pot of gold at the end of the “marijuana rainbow”*.

11.6. Rastafarians

- **Persecution and Discrimination:** Members of the Rastafarian community had experienced great trauma, discrimination and persecution as a result of the legal regime re marijuana.
- **Religious Significance:** Marijuana held religious significance for Rastafarians, a “burnt sacrament”. Members of the Rastafarian community requested that marijuana be considered as part of the Rastafarian sacrament and that there be the cessation of arrests and/or bringing charges against Rastas for the use and possession of marijuana.
- **Special Provisions:** Special provisions should be made for Rastafarians, in respect of possession and use of marijuana and places where it could be used. A special designation could be given to their tabernacles and permission given for the cultivation of a specific number of plants.

12. Acknowledgements:

The Conference of Churches in Grenada and the Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations (IAGDO) acknowledged the contribution of the following to the successful hosting of the National Round Table:-

- Professor Rose-Marie Antoine, Chair of the CARICOM Commission who presented the Commission’s Report;

- **Respondents to the Report:**
- Dr. Wendy Crawford-Daniel, Dr. Omowale Ameleru-Marshall and Dr. N. Prabhakar;
- Dr. Stephen Fletcher, Mr. Kennedy Roberts and Dr. Patrick Antoine;
- Mr. Richie Maitland, Mr. James Clarkson, Elder Ras Nang Nang and Ms. Glenda Mason-Francis;
- **Moderators:** Ms. Cheryl Kirton, Mr. Lester Andall and Retired Justice Rita Joseph-Olivetti;
- **Organizing Committee of the Round Table:** Rev. Sylbert Prescod and Bishop Clyde Harvey of the Conference of Churches in Grenada and Ms. Sandra Ferguson of the Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations,
- Non State Actors Panel and the 11th EDF Support to Non State Actors Panel
- The European Development Fund - Special Services Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
- Communal Co-operative Credit Union
- Grenville Co-operative Credit Union
- Mr. Lester Andall for facilitating administrative services
- Mr. Ricky Bedeau of the Grenada Trade Centre
- Ms. Beverley Sinclair and Island Media
- Ritchie Olliverre and his technical team
- Ms. Glenda Williams
- All participants, on site, via *Zoom* and those who followed the activity via the *Island Media* Facebook platform, *Mek We Chat*

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Agenda

**NATIONAL ROUND TABLE ON
CARICOM COMMISSION REPORT ON MARIJUANA 2018
Friday, January 22nd, 2021
Grenada Trade Centre**

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	
8.30.a.m. – 8.45 a.m.	REGISTRATION	
8.45 a.m. – 9.20 a.m.	OPENING SESSION	
	Chair's Call	
8.50 a.m.- 9.00 a.m.	Invocation	Bishop Clyde Harvey, Deputy Chairman, CCG
9.00. a.m. – 9.10 a.m.	Welcome Remarks	Rev. Sylbert Prescod, Chairman, CCG
9.10 a.m. – 9.15 a.m.	Introduction to Objectives, Format and Guidelines for Engagement	Sandra C.A. Ferguson
9.15 a.m. – 9.20 a.m.	Remarks	Hon. Peter David, Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Forestry
9.20 a.m. – 10.20 a.m.	PRESENTATION OF CARICOM COMMISSION REPORT ON MARIJUANA 2018 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator: Bishop Clive Harvey, Deputy Chairman, Conference of Churches in Grenada 	
9.20 a.m. – 9.25 a.m.	Introduction of Presenter, Professor Rosemarie Belle Antoine, Chairperson, CARICOM Commission	Bishop Clyde Harvey
9.25. a.m. – 10.15 a.m.	Presentation	Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine
10.15 a.m.– 10.25 a.m.	Plenary: Questions re Clarification	
10.25 a.m.– 12.00	RESPONSE TO REPORT: RE HEALTH, CHILDREN, YOUTH & OTHER SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator: Ms. Cheryl Kirton 	
10. 25 a.m.- 10.30 p.m.	Introduction of Moderator	Rev. Sylbert Prescod, Chairman, Conference of Churches in Grenada
10.30 a.m. – 10.35 a.m.	Introduction of Discussants	Ms. Cheryl Kirton, moderator
	Dr. Wendy Crawford-Daniel	Research sociologist and professor of Social Sciences at St. George's University

10.35 a.m. - 11.15 a.m.	Dr. N. Prabhakar	Via Zoom: Psychiatrist; lecturer Public Health Dept, St. George's University
	Dr. Omowale Amuleru-Marshall	Via Zoom; Professor Emeritus; Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, St. George's University; Immediate Past President Caribbean Alliance of National Psychological Associations;
11.15 a.m. 11.25 a.m.	Respondents: Questions and Answer	
11.25 a.m. – 11.55 a.m.	Plenary: Questions and Answer	
11.55 a.m. – 12.00	Wrap Up Panel	Moderator
12.00 a.m. – 12.10	Summary of Take-Aways: Morning Session	Dr. Stephen Fletcher
12.10 p.m. 1.00 p.m.	L U N C H B R E A K	
1.00 p.m. – 2.50 p.m.	RESPONSE TO REPORT: RE ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS • Moderator: Mr. Lester Andall	
1.00 p.m. – 1.05 p.m.	Introduction of Moderator	Rev. Sylbert Prescod, Chair, CCG
1.05 p.m. – 1.15 p.m.	Introduction of Respondents	Mr. Lester Andall, Moderator
1.15 p.m. 1.55 p.m.	Dr. Stephen Fletcher	Chief Strategist & Lobbyist Campeche International Consultants Inc.; Grenada's former Ambassador to EU and EU States
	Mr. Kennedy Roberts	Health Economist; Lecturer, Public Health Department, St. George's University
	Dr. Patrick Antoine	Via Zoom; Economist; Grenada's Former Ambassador to CARICOM;
1.55 p.m. – 2.05 p.m.	Respondents: Question and Answer	
2.05 p.m. 2.40 p.m.	Plenary: Question and Answer	
2.45 p.m.- 2.50 p.m.	Wrap up Panel	Moderator

2.50 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.	RESPONSE TO REPORT: DECRIMINALISATION, LEGALISATION, LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS • Moderator: Retired Justice Rita Josph-Olivetti	
2.50 p.m. – 2.55 p.m.	Introduction of Moderator	Rev. Sylbert Prescod, CCG
2.55 p.m. – 3.05 p.m.	Introduction of Respondents	Justice Joseph-Olivetti, Moderator
3.05 p.m.- 3.55 p.m.	Mr. Richie Maitland	Via Zoom: Attorney-at-law, specialization human rights
	Mr. James Clarkson	Former Commissioner of Police
	Ras Nang Nang	Elder, Rastafari Community
	Ms. Glenda Mason Francis	Retired Educator;
3.55 p.m. – 4.05 p.m.	Discussants: Question and Answer	
4.05 p.m. – 4.35 p.m.	Plenary: Question and Answer	
4.35 p.m. – 4.40 p.m.	Wrap up Panel	Moderator
4.40 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.	Summary of Take-Aways; afternoon session	Mr. Lester Andall
5.35 p.m. – 5.45 p.m.	Wrap Up and Closing Remarks	CCG/IAGDO

Appendix 2: Objectives, Format and Guidelines

Conference of Churches Grenada & Inter Agency Group of Dev. Org.
NATIONAL ROUND TABLE
CARICOM COMMISSION REPORT ON MARIJUANA 2018
Friday, January 22nd, 2021
Grenada Trade Centre Annex

1. Background and Context:

The National Round Table is being undertaken in the following context:-

- **Statements by Government Officials:-**
 - Hon. Peter David, recently re-assigned to the Ministry of Agriculture, advised that Grenada would be undertaking consultations on the decriminalization of marijuana.
 - At a town hall meeting, Prime Minister Mitchell also advised that Government had “*established a committee locally to review the CARICOM Marijuana Commission report that will guide the country to set the framework for moving forward with the recommendations*”.
- **A Flag Ship Report produced by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank:-**
The Medicinal Cannabis (R)evolution – Challenges in Banking a Budding Industry in the ECCU – which noted that the potential economic benefits have been one of the main motivations for the region’s legalization drive. The cultivation of cannabis is expected to be a boon for the agricultural sector and for regional farmers.

2. Objectives:

The National Round Table is NOT a consultation.

- The purpose of the National Round Table is to **contribute to the stakeholders’ knowledge and understanding of the recommendations of the CARICOM Commission Report** thereby contributing to their informed engagement on the subject of decriminalization of marijuana during public consultations.
- The National Round Table is intended to provide a platform to:-
 - **Present the findings and recommendations** of the *Report of the Regional CARICOM Commission on Marijuana 2018*.
 - **Invite feedback/responses from key stakeholders and experts** on the various aspects of the Report
 - **Invite feedback from other stakeholders** attending the Round Table
 - **Identify the key issues and concerns from the stakeholders** in respect of the recommendations of the Commission.

3. Format:

- **Presentation of the CARICOM Commission Report on Marijuana 2018.** It will be presented by the Chairperson of the Commission, Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine. There will be a very brief period for question in respect of any clarifications required.
- **Responses:** Responses to the findings and recommendations of the Report have been invited from various perspectives and interests. These have been broadly grouped into **three panels:**
 - **Health and Social Considerations, including Children and Youth**
 - **Economic**
 - **Decriminalization, Legislation, Law and Human Rights**
- **Panels:**
 - **Personal Capacity:** Respondents are invited in their personal/professional capacity.
 - **Respondents/Discussants:** Each respondent/discussant is afforded a **maximum of 12 minutes.**
 - **Question and Answer Period, Respondents/Discussants:** Following the contributions of all the respondents, a **maximum of 10 minutes** is permitted for:
 - **Questions from moderator to respondents (to facilitate clarification)**
 - **Rebuttals/questions** among respondents/discussants.
 - **Plenary, Question and Answer:** There will a maximum of 30 minutes to accommodate questions and comments from the audience.

4. Guidelines for Engagement:

- **Spirit of Round Table:** It is intended that this activity be a forum for honest, frank and open dialogue conducted in an atmosphere devoid of acrimony, personal attacks or other prejudices.
- **Questions via Moderator:** The moderator is in charge of each of the panels. All questions are to be directed via the moderator.
- **Address Issues:** Persons wishing to ask questions/make comments are requested to **address issues not personalities.**
- **Please identify yourself – name and organisation** if representing a group/organisation.
- **Brief:** Persons asking questions are requested to **be brief and to the point.**
- **Conduct:** It is anticipated that everyone will conduct himself/herself in a manner which contributes to the integrity of the forum and to the process of fair, open and frank discussion.

Appendix 3: Biographical Notes

PROFESSOR ROSE MARIE BELLE ANTOINE

- CHAIR of the CARICOM Regional Commission on Marijuana
- Dean, Faculty of Law, UWI and Professor of Labour Law & Offshore Financial Law;
- Professor Antoine is an award winning author, attorney, activist and international legal consultant.
- She holds a doctorate in law from Oxford University, an LLM from Cambridge, and the LLB from the University of the West Indies. Antoine was elected by OAS states as a Commissioner on the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Washington 2011 and President in 2015. She was the Rapporteur for Persons of African Descent, Rapporteur for Indigenous Peoples and the inaugural Head of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Unit at the Unit at the IACHR / OAS.
- Professor Antoine is a distinguished and accomplished regional scholar and contributor to the regions development. She has won international awards and honours for her scholarship which has been described by international jurists as “original, insightful and amazing”.
- She created history by winning the distinguished UWI Vice Chancellor’s Prize for Excellence twice (research, then public service). She is an Honorary Fellow of the International Society for Trust Practitioners, the only person from the Caribbean. Antoine has published twelve books, including four with the renowned Oxford University Press and numerous scholarly articles.
- Formerly a Legal Officer at the ILO in Geneva, Antoine has served as Lead Consultant/ Advisor to all of the governments of CARICOM, the UK, Venezuela, USA and Canada, NGOs, the judiciary and to several international organizations, including the UN Drugs Control Project, UNIFEM, EU, OAS.
- Professor Antoine has therefore contributed an important share to the practical realisation of the aims of Caribbean legal development through her pioneering scholarship, activism and consultancy work. As a result, she is described by governments, international sources and others as the “foremost labour law expert in the region”, the “leading” authority in the region on International/ Offshore Financial Law and a “change agent” in HIV law.

DR. WENDY CRAWFORD DANIEL

- Wendy Crawford-Daniel is a research sociologist and professor of Social Sciences at St. George's University. She achieved a Ph.D. in Sociology from Temple University in the US.
- In addition to her teaching, she is a social researcher, an activist and advocate for the social development of Grenada. Her Social Research includes research on drugs, alcohol and marijuana use among the prison populations in the OECS and she collaborates closely with Grenada Drug Epidemiology Network (GRENDEN).
- Dr. Crawford's research covers a wide range of socio-economic topics including Aging, Juvenile Justice, Disabilities, Poverty, Gender and Quality of Life.
- She holds membership in several community organizations and serves on the Board of Directors of Grenada Save the Children Fund and The Hilarion Home.
- Dr. Crawford-Daniel is also an author who has penned two docu-novels on the social and cultural life of Grenada.

DR. OMOWALE AMULERU-MARSHALL

Dr. Omowale Amuleru-Marshall, originally from the Republic of Guyana, is:

- Professor Emeritus of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at St. George's University.
- Immediate Past President of the Caribbean Alliance of National Psychological Associations – CANPA, and, relevant to today's topic, has been:
- Chief Psychologist of Narcotic Addiction, Boston City Hospital, in the 70s and 80s, and later, in the 80s and 90s:
- Consulting Psychologist, Youth Education/Prevention Program, Dimock Community Health Center Alcoholism Programs, Roxbury, MA
- Director, Cork Institute on Black Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, Morehouse School of Medicine, Atlanta, GA
- Consulting Psychologist, Community Substance Abuse Programs, Georgia Regional Hospital, Atlanta, GA, and most recently, in the 20s,
- Member, Expert Council of OAS/CICAD-PROCCER Training and Certification Program for Caribbean Drug Treatment and Prevention Personnel.
- Global Master Trainer, Universal Treatment Curriculum, A collaboration of The Colombo Plan, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the OAS, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) of the US State Department.

DR. NARASIMHAN PRABHAKAR

- Professor. St. George's University in the department of clinical teaching unit and Psychiatry.(20 years)
- Seconded to the Ministry of Health, Grenada;
- Clerkship Director for 3rd and 4th year medical students in Psychiatry.
- Many years of experience in rehabilitation (drugs and alcohol) in the state of Grenada; Involved with Carlton House since its inception in 1984.

KENNEDY ROBERTS, BSC (ECON), MPH.

Mr. Kennedy Roberts is from Petite Martinique, Grenada. He has been a faculty member in the Department of Public Health at St. George's University since September 1998, teaching at the undergraduate, graduate and medical school level.

He obtained a B.Sc. in Economics from the University of the West Indies and a Master of Public Health degree from Boston University. Before coming to SGU, he worked within the Grenada Public Service from 1981 to 1994, during which time he performed several functions including being the Health Planner and Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, and Acting Director, Budget and Planning Division in the Ministry of Finance. Between 1994-1997 he worked as the Health Economist at the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Secretariat based in St. Lucia, where he pioneered the promotion of National Health Insurance in the Eastern Caribbean.

He has been involved in several other areas of activity including being a Senator in the Upper House of Parliament in Grenada, the Chairman of the National Insurance Board, a Board member of the Grenada Electricity Corporation (GRENLEC), the Grenada Save the Children Development Agency (GRENSAVE), Grenada Planned Parenthood Association and the Caribbean Family Planning Affiliation

DR STEPHEN FLETCHER (PhD), Aston University, UK; MBA (Middlesex University, UK).
Queen Elizabeth Fellow (2006)

Professional Career

May 2016 – Continuing	Chief Strategist & Lobbyist Campeche International Consultants Inc. & Campeche Institute for Marketing & Cooperative Education
November 2013 – 2014:	Nutmeg Cluster Project Coordinator. (Grenada Industrial Development Corporation)
December 2012 – March 2013:	Ambassador Designate, Peoples Republic of China.
November 2008 – November 2012:	Ambassador to the, Africa, Caribbean & Pacific Group of States (ACP), European Union (EU) and Head of Mission to United Nations Organizations based in Europe.

During the Period (2008 – 2013) also served as bi-lateral Ambassador to:

- The Kingdom of Belgium
- The Kingdom of The Netherlands
- The Republic of France
- The Federal Republic of Germany
- The Kingdom of Luxembourg

August 2006 – October 2008:	St. George’s University Assistant Professor. School of Arts & Science Chairman, Curriculum Committee, St. George’s University.
2004 – 2006:	Middlesex University (UK), Tutor. Aston University (UK), Sessional Lecturer.

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996 – 2004:	LIME (Cable & Wireless). Held various position at Local and Regional Offices.
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- 1993-1996: Grenada Development Bank.
Held various positions including; Acting General Manager, & Head of, Small Enterprise Development Unit.
- 1986 – 1990: Owner/Manager, Fletchers’ Marketing Research & Promotions Agency (Publishers of: Weekend Review and The Bargainer Now Named “The Barnacle.”
- 1986 (January – June): Institute for Further Education renamed - T.A. Marryshow Community College
Teacher of Advanced Level Economics.
- 1983 (July – November): Ministry of Trade – Research Assistant.

Directorship

2019 – continuing

- Director, Grenada Chamber of Industry & Commerce

Research Interests

- Blockchain and Alternative Currencies
- Financial Services Sector
- Small Island Developing States & Development
- Gender, economic development, death & dying
- Poverty & Inclusion
- International Trade in Commodities

Published:

- Analysis of a Failed Primary Commodity Cartel - *The Grenada Cooperative Nutmeg Association (GCNA) and the Association of Indonesian Nutmeg Exporters (ASPIN) Joint Marketing Agreement.*
- Poor Commonwealth No Longer? Challenges Facing the Commonwealth in Achieving the United Nations Development Goals (2006) – A Commonwealth Publication.
- Development & Impetus to the Development of the ECCB, Digital Currency

Professional Biography

Dr. Patrick Antoine

Dr. Patrick Antoine is a renowned Caribbean Intellectual and Regional Thinker with a wealth of experience in both the public and private spheres. Dr. Patrick Antoine is an Economist by profession, and holds over thirty (30) years of experience working throughout the Caribbean, North America and Latin America; having consulted with major multinational corporations and having worked for several Latin American and Caribbean Governments on trade and macro-policy issues. He has also authored a number of Technical Studies and Academic Papers.

Dr. Antoine has served as Ambassador to the World Trade Organization; Ambassador to CARICOM; Ambassador to the OECS; Ambassador with responsibility for External Negotiations, and Chief Economic and Policy Advisor to the Government of Grenada. He also served as Lead Technical Adviser for the Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM), as well as Lead Negotiator on Agriculture.

He has served as Head of Multinational Projects Trade and Investment for the Inter-American Institute on Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) for ten (10) years, as well as Special Adviser to the Director General of IICA from 2018-2019;

He sits as a Director on several regional boards, and serves as Lecturer in the Masters in International Trade Policy Programme of University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus.

Dr. Antoine's current professional responsibilities include:

- Lead Consultant to the CARICOM Private Sector Organisation (CPSO);
- Principal Consultant, ECONOTECH Limited;
- President of British American and CLICO, Policy Holders Group of the Eastern Caribbean, (BACOL);
- Dr Antoine is also the Lead Consultant of the Regional Beverage Alcohol Alliance; and
- International Trade Policy Consultant, Caribbean Breweries Association.

MR. JAMES CLARKSON

- Mr. James Clarkson is a former head of the Royal Grenada Police Force, serving as Commissioner of Police on two occasions – 1979-1981 and from 2008 – 2012. During his second tenure, he was *Grenada's National Point of Contact to the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism* and chaired the meeting of national experts on counter-terrorism at the Organization of American States (OAS) at the March 2011 meeting in Washington.
- He has also served as Bandmaster of the Royal Grenada Police Force Band. He served in the defence force regiments of both Jamaica and of Trinidad and Tobago, serving as Band Master of the regiment bands.
- He is a musicologist, having pursued studies in music at McGill University in Canada.
- He is also associated with the steel band movement and has been the arranger for one of Grenada's premier steel bands, the Angel Harps for some 40 odd years.

MRS. GLENDA MASON-FRANCIS. O.B.E., B.A. (UNIVERSITY OF LONDON).

Mrs. Glenda Mason-Francis was born on January 20th 1940.....so she just celebrated her 81st birthday 2 days ago! She is the widow of Mr. Justin Francis and they have 2 daughters.

Mrs. Mason-Francis attended St. Joseph's Convent, St. George's and graduated in 1957. She then also attended the Grenada Boys' Secondary School and the Anglican High School where she received a Higher School Certificate in 1959. In 1964 she obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of London, at the Mona Campus, Jamaica.

Mrs. Glenda Mason-Francis taught at the Anglican High School from 1960-1961. She was also a French, Latin and History teacher at The Grenada Boys' Secondary School from 1964-1984. She then returned to the Anglican High School where she became the Principal and a French teacher from 1984-1999. For all who may have been taught by her and know her reputation, Mrs. Mason-Francis is known to be a formidable disciplinarian.

Some of her other involvement includes:

- Member of the Soroptomist International of Grenada from 1973
- Founding member of the Association of Masters and Mistresses since 1966
- Founding member of the Secondary Schools' Intercol Games since 1965
- Member of the Grenada Union of Teachers
- GUT Representative on the Interim Council of the Grenada National College, now known as TAMCC, from 1986-1989
- Member of the Anglican Mother's Union

- Past member of the Board of Trustees and the Parochial Church Council of the Anglican Church, St. George's
- A Lay reader of the Anglican Church, St. George's since 2000 to 2019
- Member of the Governing Body of the Anglican High School
- Member of the Past Pupils' Association of the Anglican High School
- One of the main organisers of the St. Joseph's Convents Past Pupils Association Reunion of 1987, as well as the Anglican High School 75th Anniversary celebration in 1991.

CHERYL KIRTON

- Is a former teacher
- Served as the Executive Director of the Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce
- Recently Retired Human Resource Manager of Geo. F. Huggins
- Served on the Board of Directors of various institutions – in both the business and voluntary sector.
- Continues to be very involved in the activities of her church and other social development initiatives.

ABRAHAM 'LESTER' ANDALL

- Retired banker with 34 years progressive financial services experience in commercial and international private banking;
- His executive profile includes senior manager and board directorship with RBTT Bank, General Manager at Grenada Airports Authority and most recent, General Manager at Grenada Distiller's Ltd.
- He served as president of the Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce; serves on the board of Grenada Broadcasting Corporation and is a past president of the Rotary Club of Grenada (2018- 2019).
- He is presently principal at AMS a solely owned management advisory and consultancy services

RITA JOSEPH -OLIVETTI

Justice Rita Joseph- Olivetti is a retired judge of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. She served primarily in Antigua and Barbuda and in the Virgin Islands (British).

Her work exposed her to the entire gamut of litigation ranging from Family law, Civil Law, Administrative Law, Commercial and Criminal law.

Justice Joseph-Olivetti also served as a member of the Judiciary in Belize, Central America for nigh on a year after her retirement from the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court.

Prior to her elevation to the Bench in 2002 she practiced law in Grenada in the private field.

Justice Joseph- Olivetti now resides in Grenada and takes a keen interest in social and environmental issues. She is also an author, having self- published her first novel **The Red Door** in 2018 and is now engaged on her second.

Appendix 4: List of Participants

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

NAME	ORGNISATION	CONTACT INFO.
Bishop Clyde Harvey	Conference of Churches in Grenada	459-2777
Rev. Sylbert Prescod	Conferences of Churches in Grenada	sylpres@hotmail.com / 405-1122
Hanchale Coutain	Grenada Herbal Foundation	410-5770
Yasin Kibawi	Grenada Herbal Foundation	520-8076
Sandra C.A. Ferguson	Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations.	iagdognd2013@gmail.com /405-0797
Glenda Williams	Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations	williams.glenda@gmail.com
Lester Andall	Moderator	abrahamandall@gmail.com / 536-8002
Cheryl Kirton	Moderator	440-2716
Rita Joseph-Olivetti	Moderator	
Kenneth Noel	New National Party	keno@spiceisle.com
Richard McPhail	New National Party	mcphail@spiceisle.com / 534-5683
Bongo Fire		534-4128
Prince Nang Nang	Nyabingi	449-9683
Michael Baptiste	Nyabingi House	537-2858
Trevor Crowe	Nyabingi, Carriacou	534-9788
Empress Maturo	Nyabingi , La Mode/ Rastafarian Org. for Centralization	410-7300
Ras Ruan	Nyabingi, La Mode	rasruan1930@gmail.com / 420-0271
Cheryl Lady Cheryl Edwards	Rastafarian Org. for Centralization	
Kennedy Roberts	Respondent	kennedyroberts@gmail.com /440-7053
Dr. Wendy Crawford-Daniel	Respondent	wcrawford@sgu.edu / 457-4856
Dr. Stephen Fletcher	Respondent	spletcher63@gmail.com / 415-4224
James Clarkson	Respondent	405-5456
Shawn Regis	Twelve Tribes of Israel	535-9986
Wayne Bain	Twelve Tribes of Israel	459-5296
Gary Stephen		stephengary9@gmail.com /415-5259

Appendix 5: Facebook Statistics

The screenshot shows a Facebook page for 'Mek We Chat'. The main content is a video post titled 'National round table on CARICOM Commission Report on Marijuana 2018 - Friday, January 22nd, 2021 at the Grenada Trade Centre'. The video shows a man in a checkered shirt speaking at a microphone. Below the video, the post statistics are displayed: 1,198 People reached and 120 Engagements. There is a 'Boost Post' button and 3 reactions (likes, love, wow) shown. The post also has 4 comments and 18 shares. The left sidebar shows the 'Manage Page' menu with options like Home, Inbox (9 new comments), Business app store, Manage jobs, Notifications (18 new), and Insights. The top navigation bar includes search, home, and various social media icons. The browser's address bar shows 'facebook.com/mekwechat' and the system tray at the bottom indicates the time is 5:38 PM on 1/22/2021.



Baillies Bacolet, St David
 PO Box 1453, Grand Anse
 Grenada W I
 Tel: (1 473) 417 3467 458 3467
 Email: caribbeaninformationhub@gmail.com

22 January 2021

**National Round Table on
 CARICOM Commission Report on Marijuana - 2018
 Friday, 22 January 2021
 Grenada Trade Centre**

Please see below statistics for the live broadcast of the sessions.

Facebook	1198
Shares (live)	18
Engagements	120
Zoom	20

General comments:

- There were questions and comments on the Facebook page and on Zoom that did not form part of the discussion as they were not acknowledged by the moderators.
- There were some distortions with the audio at times, however, the crew managed to correct most of the problems.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beverley Sinclair".

**Signed: Beverley Sinclair (Ms)
 Chief Operations Officer**

Multimedia productions, image management, training in communication, marketing, public relations, customer service

Appendix 6: Photos



Dr. Wendy Crawford- Daniel



Elder Ras Nang Nang,



Minister David (2nd from left) in the Audience