



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE**  
**2 Port Royal Street, Kingston**  
**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Foreign Ministry Provides Update on Cuban Medical Cooperation Programme**

Senator the Honourable Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, has today provided assurances regarding Jamaica's longstanding Cuban medical cooperation programme in light of concerns expressed in the public domain.

The Minister affirmed that Jamaica's bilateral medical cooperation with Cuba has been in place for more than five decades and remains a vital pillar of Jamaica's healthcare system, providing essential services in various public health facilities. In an early morning statement updating the nation on the Government's efforts, Minister Johnson Smith emphasised that a review of the programme had been initiated well before international scrutiny had commenced. She also reiterated the country's commitment to ethical labour practices and expressed confidence that while improvements would be made to the administration of the programme, it could not be found to involve human trafficking.

**“Jamaica’s non-adversarial handling of this matter reflects not only our practice of diplomacy, but the strength of our bilateral relationships with both Cuba and the United States. Our structured process of review and engagement is progressing well, and we remain confident in the integrity of this programme. We continue to engage diplomatically, including discussions**

**with the Cuban Foreign Minister, the current head of the U.S. Embassy and of course as between CARICOM Foreign Ministers, to exchange perspectives and ensure the best understanding and outcomes of this matter,”** says Johnson Smith.

Jamaica’s medical cooperation programme with Cuba has been in place since 1976 and has operated under Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) that have been upheld by successive administrations. Minister Johnson Smith has also clarified that as the arrangements are being reviewed for renewal, the Government has taken the opportunity to review and improve administrative processes – an initiative that was already underway as part of Jamaica’s continuous commitment to best practices and good governance.

“Given the MOU’s expiration last year, we had already begun a review process before international concerns were raised. While we have identified a few areas for alignment with our own overseas labour programmes, we are confident that the Cuban programme is a legitimate bilateral cooperation programme, not an example of trafficking”, Johnson Smith asserts.

The Foreign Minister says the Government remains committed to diplomacy as a means of strengthening bilateral and regional relationships. She noted that this approach has generally led to constructive engagement and productive outcomes on challenging issues. As global discussions evolve, she reaffirmed that Jamaica will continue to prioritise partnerships and cooperation, ensuring that its foreign policy decisions align with national interests and the principles of mutual respect.