



**PRESENTATION BY MS. JAMIE-ANN CHEVANNES, YOUTH
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GOVERNOR GENERAL'S IBELIEVE CONFERENCE
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Let me first of all introduce myself, my name is Jamie-Ann Chevannes, and as you have heard from the Moderator, I am the Youth Outreach Officer of National Integrity Action and have served in this position for the last four years. Allow me also to apologise for the unavoidable absence of our Executive Director, Professor Trevor Munroe, who has been a long time annual participant in the Youth Consultative Conferences, but who is unavoidably absent this year. He and I and all of NIA's Board, staff and volunteers wish to say how honoured we are to be once again a sponsor in this yet another important IBI-YCC initiative of the "Governor General's Programme For Excellence". The more so we are pleased at the relevance of the topic which we have exploring during this year's conference "Stop Human Trafficking!!" Human Trafficking as you would have heard from Deputy Superintendent, Carl Berry, is a global problem.

- The International Labour Organisation estimates that there are 40.3 Million victims of Human Trafficking globally: 81% of them are trapped in forced labour; 25% of them are children (i.e. youth under 18); 75% are women and girls.
- The International Labour Organisation estimates that forced labour and human trafficking is a 150 Billion Dollar industry worldwide.
- In the US alone 49,000 cases of human trafficking have been reported through National Human Trafficking hotlines in the last ten years.



In combatting this global scourge, at the end of 2018 over 170 countries, including Jamaica, have ratified the Trafficking Protocol of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

In Jamaica, while there are no absolutely reliable figures, hundreds of young people under the age of eighteen have been trafficked over recent years. In one year 2015, the last for which I have seen data from the Office of the Children’s Registry, 88 children were reportedly trafficked. As we heard in earlier discussions, trafficking of children, more often than not largely derives from being deceived or tricked into believing that the life you are going into is one of more money, less poverty, one in which you will remain free to earn your way out of hardship – no such thing, as you heard from Shamar in her survival story. No doubt Jamaican young people are particularly vulnerable. The most recent figures tell us that one in four live in poverty and many suffer abuse of one type or another at home. Hence, without knowing it, many are tempted to “jump from the frying pan into the fire” of human trafficking.

To reduce and even prevent this our experience in NIA tells us that awareness building amongst the youth regarding the intrinsic wrong and harmful effect of human trafficking can build resistance and strengthen the youth in doing the right thing, that is, in behaving with integrity.

Surprisingly to many, our young people know what is right in very many instances and find what is wrong unacceptable. In that regard I want to share with you some findings of a report commissioned by the Office of the Contractor General and carried by the Department of Government at UWI entitled “**Youth and Corruption in Jamaica**”. The survey was published in



2017, covered all parishes, and got responses from young people, males and females, between the ages of ten and nineteen, enrolled primarily in high schools. Listen to some of the scenarios posed to the young people to capture their attitude to integrity:

- “A person does something which might be illegal in order to make his or her family live better. Is this an acceptable behaviour?” 80.7 per cent not acceptable.
- “The parent of a student gives a teacher money or a gift so that their child can get better grades.” 92.5 per cent not acceptable.
- “An unemployed person who steals electricity.” 84.9 per cent not acceptable.

Our youth therefore have a positive attitude to integrity; the majority according to the survey, would be willing to make a report about corrupt activities. Of the minority who would not see it as their duty to report, the main reason is that they feel they would not be protected or that nothing would be done. Looking at Jamaica’s population as a whole, as a result of awareness building by NIA and other organisations, through town hall meetings, television advertisements, social media posts, etc., the percentage of Jamaicans willing to tolerate or participate in bribery have dropped significantly over the last ten years.

This positive attitude to integrity provides fertile soil to plant more seeds of awareness building regarding the wrong of human trafficking. Some outreach and public awareness activities are being carried out by the National Task Force Against Trafficking In Persons (NATFATIP) through television, radio, internet and print media. However, there needs to be far more extensive outreach to teachers, students, government officials, unattached youth and



community members. We in NIA have been engaged in some of this activity but are willing to enter partnerships to strengthen this work through our Integrity Clubs in schools, our Integrity Action Movement at the Universities and in our partnership with the National Youth Council of Jamaica and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. We fully support the call made earlier this year by the National Task Force for ten thousand volunteers to aid in the fight against human trafficking.

However, preventive education and awareness building is not enough. There needs to be effective prosecution and punishment of those involved in this crime. For example, it is good, but far from adequate, that only six persons were prosecuted for trafficking in 2018 and only one conviction secured. Additionally, it is good but not enough that the Courts sentenced a sex trafficker convicted during 2017 to four years and five months' imprisonment in July 2018. Additionally, more effort needs to be made to protect victims.

Of course, more effective prevention, prosecution and protection requires more funding beyond the 35 to 40 Million Jamaican Dollars spent annually on anti-trafficking activities. We in NIA believe that a more determined, coordinated and concerted effort by Government to cut wastage of public funds due to corruption and breaches of our Procurement Laws, estimated at seven percent of GDP or 95.6 Billion Jamaican Dollars per year, would release resources for more effective combat of human trafficking.



So let me conclude by expressing our pleasure at participating in this conference, our commitment to continue partnerships to strengthen integrity and our confidence that this conference will help to empower youths and families in the national effort to “stop human trafficking”.