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**NIA Statement on The Tabling of the Auditor General’s Special Audit Report
On The Caribbean Maritime University (CMU)**

National Integrity Action agrees with the considered opinion of constitutional expert, Dr. The Honourable Lloyd Barnett O.J, as with other distinguished counsel who we have consulted that “there is nothing in the section [122 sub-section 2 of Jamaica’s Constitution] which provides for any discretion as to whether” the Speaker can put or not put or hold-up the laying of an Auditor General’s Report properly submitted for tabling in the House of Representatives.

Moreover, after careful scrutiny, we are unable to find any precedent, under successive JLP or PNP administrations, where a House Speaker delayed, on his own discretion the tabling of an Auditor General’s Report. Such an action, were it to be accepted, would create a dangerous precedent which any future administration could use to undermine the responsibility of Parliament to provide effective oversight in the use of public funds. Finally, this delay runs counter to the most recent advice of the International Monetary Fund, namely, “better monitoring of public funds would improve long standing gaps in transparency and accountability” (*page 11 IMF Board Fifth Review of Jamaica’s Stand-by Agreement April 2019*) as well as aggravate the risk of which the IMF warned “weak governance and corruption can severely hamper economic growth...and the rule of law” (*page 31*).

We therefore urge the House Speaker, in the interest of adhering to Jamaica’s Constitution and strengthening good governance, to table - at the next sitting of the House - the Auditor General’s Special Audit Report on the Caribbean Maritime University.

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