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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Regional Town Hall to Discuss the Needham's Point Declaration on Criminal Justice Reform**

**Kingston, Jamaica.** The public is invited to participate in a pivotal Town Hall meeting focused on the Needham's Point Declaration on Criminal Justice Reform. This event will take place on Thursday, 14 November 2024 at 6:00 pm (EST) at The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Faculty of Law, Lecture Room 2. The event will be live streamed via UWITV and is open and free to the public to attend in person.

The [Needham's Point Declaration on Criminal Justice Reform](#) was adopted on 20 October 2023 as part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the CCJ Academy for Law. It consists of 39 recommendations that provide a comprehensive roadmap for legal practitioners, academics, policymakers, and other justice stakeholders in our region.

Since the adoption of the Declaration, in around 20 criminal matters, judicial officers across the region have cited the Declaration. These decisions have cited the Declaration in relation to issues such as delay, the use of forensic evidence over eyewitness and confession evidence, measures for witness support, protection and welfare, and the representation of accused persons. In addition to judicial citations of the Declaration, several jurisdictions began to implement the recommendations listed in the Declaration.

This Town Hall aims to engage community members, local leaders, and experts in a meaningful dialogue about the implications and implementation of these reforms at the regional level.

#### **Key topics to be discussed include:**

- **The Rights of the Accused:** Ensuring that individuals accused of crimes are treated fairly including legal representation, the presumption of innocence, and the right to a fair trial.
- **The Rights of Victims/Survivors:** Recognising and upholding the rights of victims and survivors is crucial to providing support and resources to victims, ensuring their voices are heard throughout the judicial process.
- **The Police and Prosecution:** The roles and responsibilities of police and prosecutors in modernising the criminal justice system.

Speakers at the event include the Honourable Delroy Chuck, KC, MP, Minister of Justice, Jamaica; Mr Richard Stewart, OD, Deputy Commissioner of Police; Mr Peter Champagnie, KC; Ms Mickel Jackson from Jamaicans for Justice; and others who will share insights and answer questions from attendees as well as persons online. Additionally, key figures from countries across the English-speaking Caribbean will also appear virtually to share the developments in their respective criminal justice systems. The session will be moderated by Ms Dionne Jackson-Miller. This is an opportunity for the people to voice their concerns, share their experiences, and contribute to shaping an effective criminal justice system. Members of the public can learn more about the event on the Court's [Facebook page](#).

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