

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND INFORMATION

National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence

1. Introduction

1.1 Members are being asked to note the National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence 2018-2023 (NPACV), attached at *Appendix I*; and the accompanying Road Map for Ending Violence Against Children, attached at *Appendix II*.

2. Background

2.1 In 2015, World leaders committed to ending all forms of violence against children by 2030. This resulted in the creation of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and, in an attempt to create accelerated action to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.2, the Global Partnership designated fifteen Pathfinder Countries, each charged with the commitment of three to five years of fast-tracked action to end violence against children. Jamaica, in its commitment to achieve the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals and specifically SDG 16.2, joined the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children in 2016 and became the only country in the Caribbean to become designated as a Pathfinder Country.

2.2 Pathfinder countries are guided by INSPIRE strategies, a technical package developed by the World Health Organization consisting of seven strategies that together provide a framework for ending violence against children. INSPIRE includes: Implementation and Enforcement of Laws; Norms and Values; Safe Environments; Parent and Caregiver Support; Income and Economic Strengthening; Response and Support Services; and Education and Life Skills. The development of the NPACV and Road Map are deliverables for Pathfinder Countries, and will be pivotal to achieving the objective of reducing the impact of violence on children through an integrated approach to prevention, mitigation, and improved response to violence against children.

2.3 The NPACV outlines a range of strategies and programmes over the envisioned five-year period that would be implemented by key stakeholders in the child protection system. It signals the commitment of the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) and key stakeholders to creating and maintaining a protective environment for Jamaica's children who are victims or perpetrators of violence and abuse, as well as to fulfil the country's obligations under key international instruments.

2.4 The Road Map includes a number of steps and actions to track progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the NPACV. The Road Map also sets out the expected outcomes, key strategic actions, lead stakeholder groups and target dates for implementation.

3. Highlights of the National Plan Of Action For An Integrated Response To Children And Violence

3.1 *Goal of the NPACV:* To create and maintain a protective environment, supportive of and responsive to the issues of children and violence.

3.2 *Objective of the NPACV:* To reduce the impact of violence on children through an integrated approach to prevention, control, monitoring and intervention so that children may preserve their rights and grow to be productive citizens of Jamaica.

3.3 *Guiding Principles of the NPACV:* Underpinned by a holistic rights based approach at both the national and local level, the NPACV will be guided by the following common set of principles:

- Multi-agency collaboration and coordination in creating and implementing interventions (including a legal framework) with strong leadership, support and commitment;
- Utilising a holistic approach to intervention practices that focus not only on the child but on the family as a unit;
- Having genuine child participation, that is, children involved in matters affecting them;
- Prioritising interventions targeted at the individual, family and community, based on needs and resources and capitalising on the resources and capabilities of all sectors of the community;
- Applying evidence-based interventions to targeted problems with consideration to gender, special needs, environment and other priority areas;
- Strong commitment to implementation thereby translating laws, policies and plans into effective actions; and
- Having a robust communication strategy to address key issues regarding prevention of child violence and abuse and children's participation and protection.

3.4 *Expected Outcomes:* The implementation of the NPACV 2018-2023 is expected to yield the following five outcomes:

- Strengthened policy, legal and regulatory framework to ensure the protection of children from all forms of violence and exploitation;
- Improved quality of, and access to, services for children affected by violence;
- Strengthened family and community capacities to address issues related to children and violence;
- Enhanced public education sensitisation and training on violence prevention, the care of child victims of violence, and children's rights; and
- Integrated framework established for the effective coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NPACV.

3.5 Implementation:

3.5.1 The NPACV will be implemented by the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of Government, as well as civil society actors who are engaged in the child protection system. However, the Ministry with responsibility for children, that is, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, has ultimate responsibility for coordinating the multi-sector response for the implementation of the NPACV.

3.5.2 The Inter-Sectoral Committee on Children and Violence (ISCCV) will be the main coordination mechanism and will assume the overall coordination of the implementation of the NPACV. It is expected that the Chairperson for this Committee will be the Prime Minister or delegated representative, or the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry with responsibility for children. The ISCCV will be composed of Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments and Agencies (or other senior representatives) from MDAs including:

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Information;
- Ministry of National Security;
- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Labour and Social Security;
- Ministry of Local Government and Community Development;
- Ministry of Justice;
- Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports;
- Women Centre of Jamaica Foundation;
- Jamaica Disabilities Foundation;
- Bureau of Gender Affairs;
- Child Protection and Family Services Agency;
- Early Childhood Commission;
- Department of Correctional Services;
- Jamaica Constabulary Force;
- Planning Institute of Jamaica; and
- Office of the Children's Advocate.

It is expected that this body will meet biannually or more frequently, as required.

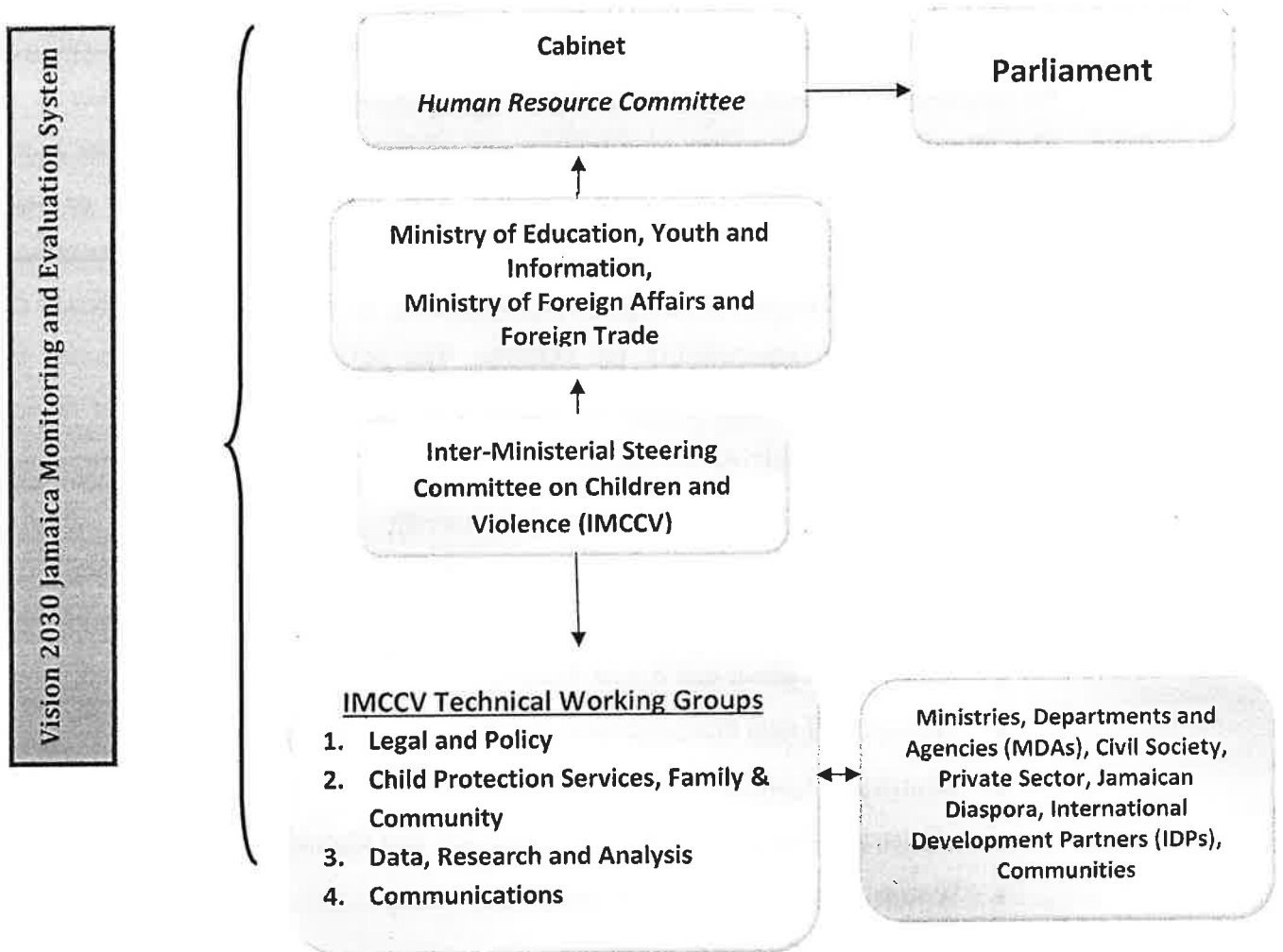
3.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

3.6.1 The NPACV will be regularly monitored at the national and sector levels to assess progress towards the goal and key targets. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system, utilising JamStats, is being developed; and will operate to collect and analyse disaggregated data on children affected by violence or at risk, based on age, gender, socio-economic grouping, and special needs and circumstances.

3.6.2 Annual reports on the status of implementation of the NPACV and the status of Jamaica's children will be prepared. Periodic and annual reviews will be conducted at the national and sector levels in order to more effectively address obstacles and accelerate progress.

3.6.3 In keeping with the guiding principle of broad-based participation, the proposed institutional arrangements are based on a partnership model of committees and working

groups. The institutional framework for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NPACV includes the following main elements as depicted in the chart below.



4. CONSULTATION

A wide cross section of persons and entities were consulted in the development of the NPACV as outlined at Appendix A of the Plan. In respect of the final draft of the Plan, the following entities were consulted:

- i. Ministry of Finance and the Public Service
- ii. Attorney General's Chambers
- iii. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade
- iv. Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport
- v. Ministry of Justice
- vi. Ministry of Health
- vii. Ministry of Labour and Social Security
- viii. Ministry of National Security
- ix. Child Protection and Family Services Agency
- x. Office of the Children's Advocate

Responses, received from nine of the ten stakeholders listed above, were reviewed and incorporated in the document, where applicable. No response was received from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

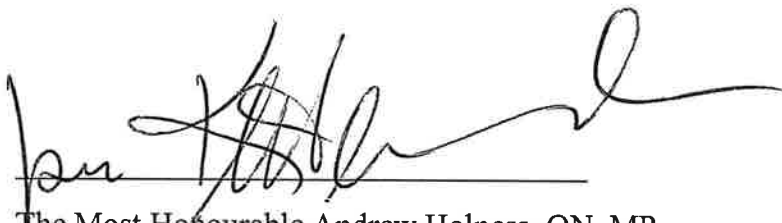
The Honourable House is being asked to note that the Office of the Children's Advocate, whilst generally supporting the NPACV and Road Map, highlighted the need for its capacity gaps to be

addressed as priority to enable its provision of effective support to the implementation of the National Plan. Additionally, the OCA also highlighted the following section of the Plan:

i. S.2.13.5 – Inadequate Enforcement of and Protection Under the Law

The OCA is requesting that, in keeping with Section 4 of the CCPA, routine referral of cases to the Children’s Advocate where it appears to the judge that the child is in need of legal representation, be mandatory rather than at the discretion of the judges, as it currently pertains.

In response to the concern raised above, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information is recommending that this proposal be explored during the review of the Child Care and Protection Act, which is currently underway.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Holness', written over a horizontal line.

The Most Honourable Andrew Holness, ON, MP
Prime Minister and Minister of Education Youth and Information
June 10, 2019