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NEWS RELEASE

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**PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON NATIONAL RJ POLICY
TO BEGIN NEXT WEEK**

Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Senator the Hon. Dorothy C. Lightbourne, Q.C., is scheduled to launch a series of public consultations aimed at engaging citizens and getting their views and recommendations with regards to a National Policy on Restorative Justice. The launch will be held at the first public session on Tuesday, August 12, at the Girl Guides Association head office, 2 Waterloo Road, St. Andrew, starting at 5:00 p.m.

Approximately 20 public discussions are being planned by the Ministry of Justice so as to broaden the range of participation in the creation of a restorative justice policy. The Ministry, in association with several local and international partners, held a number of public engagements over the last two years to build awareness of restorative justice practices in Jamaica, including the Annual Restorative Justice Week which is observed during the first week of February each year. Among the benefits to be gained from Restorative Justice practices is the willingness of people to allow the re-integration of offenders into the community with the trust that harmonious interpersonal relationships can be restored and sustained. Restorative Justice practices are also applicable in both pre- and post-sentencing periods involving serious offence cases.

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Since her appointment, Senator Lightbourne has given support to the efforts to widen restorative justice practices among the citizens. The concept, which is widely used in the Peace and Justice Centres, will also be employed in the operations of the Community Justice Tribunals when these are established. The Tribunals will be supervised by trained Justices of the Peace who are exposed to RJ practices in their training programmes.

The next round of public sessions is scheduled for the parish of St. James. Residents in and around Granville will participate in the forum set for Tuesday, August 19 at the Sam Sharpe Teacher's College. The next session is slated for Wednesday, August 20 at the St. John's Methodist Church, 2 Duke Street in Montego Bay.

The national consultation continues on August 26 and 27 in May Pen and Portmore, respectively.

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