

## **THE DECRIMINALIZATION OF CANNABIS FOR MEDICINAL PURPOSES IN ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

- St Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) will be decriminalizing Cannabis for medicinal purposes but has ruled out the possibility of opening up the industry for recreational uses.
- The Vincentian government is looking at the trade and other benefits of cannabis cultivation in SVG, with the support from local farmers and foreign investors.
- At this moment a Bill is being drafted, addressing the question of medical cannabis, which will be debated in Parliament shortly.
- This process will also address the amendment of existing legislations affected by this new initiative, as mentioned there will be a separate Bill.
- The intention of this Bill is to invoke the right of a patient to be treated with medicinal cannabis as an alternative to traditional medical treatment.
- There will be the establishment of a Medicinal Cannabis Authority. The Authority shall have regulatory oversight of the medicinal cannabis industry.
- There will be a Medicinal Cannabis Advisory Council which will be appointed by Cabinet, to provide assistance to the Authority in developing policy and guidelines in relation to the medicinal cannabis industry.

- The Bill will make provision for access to medicinal cannabis and sets out the requirements for the submission of medical certification by a medical doctor to the Authority, on behalf of a patient. It will also include the duration of registration and regulations will determine the duration of requirements for renewal of registration and the refusal of registration.
- The Bill will provide for the maintenance of a confidential register of persons who have been registered and issued identification cards by the Authority.
- The Bill will provide the scheme of licences, or authorisations necessary to authorise activities relating to the lawful supply of medicinal cannabis. The activities include cultivating, research, transporting, manufacturing, producing, storing, importing and exporting of medicinal cannabis.
- The provisions of the Bill will state who will be the enforcers. It will state the offences and also include other General provisions.

- The Agriculture and Industry Minister is the chair of the Medical Cannabis Industry Committee.
- As it relates to research along with local experts in this field foreign consultants have been contracted to assist with the process.
- Consultations with stakeholders are ongoing and nationwide outreach programmes have been organized and are being implemented at this time.

The government agrees and supports the fact that systems would need to be put in place for the safe production and export of the product but is of the belief that there is a consensus on the medicinal properties of the product and that a “high percentage” of Vincentians support the initiative of implementing a Medicinal Cannabis Industry.