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“What the convention permits, is what we have done”- PM Gonsalves on Marijuana

Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves said it is not possible for Government to fully legalise Marijuana.

Speaking on NBC radio on Wednesday, Dr. Gonsalves explained that by permitting small quantities of Marijuana for personal use and exploring avenues within the Medicinal Cannabis Industry, the Government has acted within the ambit of International Law and Conventions.

The Prime Minister noted that “what the convention permits is what we have done. We studied the convention, the convention says it can permit small quantities for recreational use...there’s an exemption for persons who want to use it for sacramental purposes...religious purposes and that you can have a medical cannabis industry...well regulated, which is what we have done.”

Dr. Gonsalves noted that the suggestion that Marijuana can be legalized at will, is an “irresponsible proposal and it is unnecessary” and there are implications and repercussions for implementing such a policy.

“The legalization of Marijuana requires you to act outside of international law, outside of the international convention on narcotics, the international convention on narcotics makes it plain that there can be no legalization under international law and there are consequences which follow, if you legalise, you cannot use the banking system, they will cut off corresponding banking relations ...without that you can’t trade, you can’t get your Western Union money,” the Prime Minister explained.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines established the Medicinal Cannabis Authority in 2019 to regulate the Medicinal Cannabis Industry, to ensure compliance with the law and support best practices in the cultivation, manufacture, management, governance and administration of the industry.