

Hon. _____

In the light of the recently published White Paper entitled *Towards the Strengthening of the Legal Framework on the Responsible Use of Cannabis*, as parents we would like to express our preoccupation with various aspects of the proposals contained therein.

Whilst acknowledging the positive development brought about through the recent decriminalisation of the possession of small amounts of cannabis, we would nonetheless like to voice our concerns about the following issues.

- The fact that cannabis can lead to serious addiction issues especially in the case of developing adolescents.
- The possible creation of tensions within our family (and possibly even with our neighbours) generated by placing cannabis plants in local households.
- The effect of potential cannabis use on persons who, while being under the effect of cannabis, are entrusted with the well-being of our children (eg. school staff and transport drivers). In this respect, an increased exposure and a culture of normalisation of cannabis use may also have adverse effects particularly if children come to view the abuse of substances as acceptable.
- We are aware that various professionals from the mental wellbeing and substance-abuse fields have expressed strong criticism with respect to the proposals in this White Paper. The mixed and /or contradictory messages proposed in this document come across as being somewhat confusing. For instance, the document refers to the need for *“a more effective, holistic educational campaign on cannabis”* whilst on the other hand it states that *“minors should be distanced from the use of cannabis”*. Such positions leave us parents in a quandary as to the real intentions behind these proposals.

As parents we would have preferred that government policies be more directed towards the creation of a healthier environment through the encouragement of sports, culture and voluntary work rather than the abuse of substances for recreational purposes. It is only in this manner that we as parents, can put our minds at rest that our children are growing in a society which promotes physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing.

We thank you for your attention and we hope that our views are taken into proper consideration.