



Challenges and Controversies Surrounding Cannabis Regulation in Thailand

The Justice Ministry called on the Public Health Ministry to categorize cannabis flower buds and extracts as narcotics until comprehensive legislation regulating cannabis use is enacted. Justice Minister Pol Col Tawee Sodsong expressed concerns regarding the absence of regulations leading to recreational cannabis use, particularly among those under 18 years of age. A public forum highlighted discrepancies in legal amendments meant to support medical use and research. Due to the lack of a comprehensive law, cannabis is easily accessible online, contributing to increased usage among individuals aged 18-19. The Justice Ministry's proposal aims to protect public health and prevent abuse, supported by a Centre for Addiction Studies (“CADS”) study indicating a rise in cannabis usage. However, Public Health Minister Cholnan Srikaew insists that classification as a narcotic requires approval from the Office of Narcotics Control Board (“ONCB”). The upcoming Cannabis and Hemp Control Bill does not seek to re-categorize cannabis parts as narcotics but aims to regulate usage based on THC content. The Cannabis Future Network opposes any attempts to label parts of the plant as narcotics and advocates for a comparative assessment of cannabis against alcohol, tobacco, and methamphetamine for public determination.