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INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION

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**REPORT OF IN-SITU VISIT
BY THE GOVERNMENTAL EXPERT GROUP (GEG)
OF THE MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM)
TO ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**



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AUGUST 16-18, 2005

A. Background

A delegation from CICAD/GEG visited Antigua and Barbuda from August 16-18, 2005, as the Governmental Experts Group (GEG) was unable to conduct an evaluation of Antigua and Barbuda for the Third Round of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM). During this round, the country did not provide the necessary information nor did it hold an adequate dialogue with the experts during the periods established for this purpose. This prevented the final report from being drafted on the follow up of progress and difficulties of the country's anti-drug policy during 2003-2004.

At the thirty-seventh regular session of CICAD, the country invited an in-situ visit to be carried out. The delegate of Antigua and Barbuda informed the Commission that the various institutions responsible for drug policy had been unable to provide the information required for an adequate evaluation by the GEG due to a lack of human resources and the institutional changes facing the country at that time.

The CICAD delegation was welcomed by senior authorities of the country and was provided with all the facilities and collaboration necessary to carry out its work.

B. Objectives of the visit

The visit was aimed at promoting the country's full participation in the MEM process, through the fulfillment of the following specific objectives:

1. To report about the MEM (process, methodology and instruments) to the new authorities and to the public officials in charge of drug policy.
2. To reestablish ties needed to permit an effective dialogue between the country and the GEG, which is the basic principle underlying the Mechanism.
3. To undertake a follow-up on implementation status of the MEM recommendations which were given to Antigua and Barbuda in previous rounds.
4. To acquire first-hand information regarding the drug phenomenon in Antigua and Barbuda and review the country's capacities to tackle it.

C. Delegation

The CICAD/GEG delegation was comprised of the following persons:

- Ambassador James Mack, Executive Secretary of CICAD
- Angela Crowdy, Coordinator of the MEM/CICAD Unit
- Darling López, General Coordinator of GEG, Principal Expert of Costa Rica

- Alvaro Ahumada, Member of GEG, Principal Expert of Chile
- Primnath Ritoe, Member of GEG, Principal Expert of Suriname

D. Counterpart

The following country authorities were the counterparts to the CICAD delegation during the visit:

- Mr. Hilson Baptiste, Minister of Housing, Culture and Social Transformation
- Ambassador Deborah Mae-Lovell, Permanent Representative to the OAS and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United States
- Mr. Starret Greene, Minister Counsellor, Mission of Antigua and Barbuda to the OAS
- Mr. Alec Vanderpoole, Director, Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy (ONDPCP), Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda to CICAD
- Mr. Clarence Pilgrim, Chairman of the National Drug Council

E. Program

The in-situ visit was scheduled to take full advantage of the time spent in the country. Meetings were held with Ministers and officials directly in charge of the various aspects of drug policy in Antigua and Barbuda (**Annex I**). Thus, Ambassador Mack met with various political authorities while the rest of the mission team held technical meetings with those in charge of programs.

Furthermore, a joint press conference was held with the participation of Minister Hilson Baptiste, Mr. Clarence Pilgrim, and Ambassador James Mack, which covered information on CICAD and the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere as well as the decision of authorities to strengthen their commitment to the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism.

F. Overview

The mission team wishes to highlight some elements characterizing the drug situation in Antigua and Barbuda and which were the subject of discussion with those responsible for the different areas of the country's drug policy:

It is not yet possible to determine the current magnitude of the problem of drug abuse in Antigua and Barbuda. To do this, studies in the general population or specific population would be required, drawn up on the basis of representative samples, in order to quantify objectively aspects such as prevalence of use, risk perception, age of onset, and consumption modalities.

Nevertheless, the mission team wishes to emphasize that the study among the school population conducted in 2005 using CICAD's Inter-American Drug Use Data System (SIDUC) methodology and whose data are still being processed, without a doubt constitutes progress

for learning about the drug problem in Antigua and Barbuda. This study shall constitute the groundwork for building an integrated drug data system, which is one of the MEM recommendations that the country is trying to implement.

Likewise, the study among the school population will guide the development of programs in the education sector and become a source of reference to compare with future studies among the same population sector and to determine trends.

Despite the above, the information provided by the persons interviewed indicates that the principal substances used are alcohol, marijuana, crack and cocaine, although there is special concern about marijuana, as its use is beginning early in primary schools.

Furthermore, the mission team observes that the National Anti-Drug Plan, in force since 2002, has not been fully developed in all of its areas. Thus, there is an imbalance between demand reduction and supply reduction.

Indeed, there seems to be more development, that is, adequate resources and trained staff, in the area of interdiction, such as control of money laundering and drug trafficking, both under the responsibility of the Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy (ONDCP). The above is in contrast to demand reduction activities. For example, the Substance Abuse Prevention Unit has no financial, material, or human resources that would enable it to develop and multiply preventive activities.

Nevertheless, authorities recognize that demand reduction programs have not been given due importance among the government's priorities, and indicated their commitment to strengthen these types of programs. In fact, the National Anti-Drug Plan is now being redrafted with a holistic approach that brings together all aspects characterizing the drug problem.

To promote this plan, the National Drug Council has been reconstructed; it had been inactive for a long time and had not been able to perform its role of spearheading the drug strategy of Antigua and Barbuda. At present, the Council's mission is to produce changes in the population's behavior through public education, legislation and other related activities, by the participation and association with civil organizations, which would lead to a major decline in the abuse of licit and illicit drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and other substances.

The objectives of the Council are attached in **Annex II**.

Furthermore, the decision by the authorities to give priority to the development of school programs aimed at achieving "drug-free schools" is promising. The mission team hopes that such programs will become sustainable initiatives, developed on an ongoing basis, with a planned curriculum or program of activities, supported by written or audiovisual materials.

On another point, the mission team noted that no progress has been made in drawing up minimum standards of care of treatment centers. These standards consist of guidelines established by the authority in charge, standards that must be complied with by public and

private treatment services in order to guarantee professional care for patients. In general, these guidelines stem from an agreement between the Ministry of Health and those who provide service for the treatment of drug use. In view of the few centers in the country, an additional effort could be made to tackle this shortage quickly, which is yet another recommendation by MEM.

One aspect where deficiencies are apparent and which also involves a recommendation by MEM is the control of pharmaceutical products and the control of chemical substances. There is no coordination or communication between the different agencies in charge of the use and regulation of said products: Police Department, Chief Medical Office - Ministry of Health, Pesticides Control Board - Ministry of Agriculture, and the Customs Department. In this regard, the mission team observed an unfamiliarity with the competence and responsibilities of each entity in the corresponding control and supervision and, in some cases, lack of knowledge about the substance subject to international control and the mechanisms established in the 1988 United Nations Convention and CICAD's Model Regulations for such purposes.

The absence of adequate coordination between the above-mentioned entities prevents Antigua and Barbuda from implementing another recommendation of the MEM aimed at establishing a pre-export notification system for controlled chemical substances. This system refers to the exchange between a country proposing to export or re-export controlled chemical substances to another country, which is the end recipient of the chemical or through which the chemicals shall be transshipped. Police authorities indicated that they only exchange information in specific cases requested by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The notifications should be used as a means to confirm the identity of the end users of the consignment. They also provide an opportunity to exchange information between agencies responsible for the control of chemicals for administrative, investigative, and operational purposes.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the workshop held at the end of the visit brought together various agencies responsible for aspects of the drug policy of Antigua and Barbuda, namely: ONDCP, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Health Information/Division of Health, Pharmacy Council, Ministry of Education, Police Department Armoury, Her Majesty's Prison, Chemistry and Food Tech, Director of Public Prosecutions, Pesticides Control Board, Government Chemist Laboratory, Ministry of Labour, AIDS Secretariat, Customs and Excise, and the Police Drug Squad.

This proved to be an excellent opportunity to provide a practical demonstration of the principal aspects characterizing the MEM. That is, the process and methodology used and the evaluation questionnaire with its respective indicators. The workshop became a place for learning and meeting between the participants, during which the important role these authorities play in providing timely responses to the indicators was highlighted.

Likewise for the members of the mission team who delivered the workshop, it was an excellent opportunity to understand the complexity of the national drug situation. This first experience should serve as the basis for proposing a guide for in-situ visits, which include,

for example, interviews with persons responsible for the different levels of program development.

G. Conclusions

The mission team considers highly significant the support and commitment to the MEM which was expressly demonstrated by Prime Minister Winston Baldwin Spencer on receiving the delegation during a Cabinet meeting. This marked special deference to CICAD and the development of the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere. Clearly, the concern which was expressed will be an incentive for the full participation of Antigua and Barbuda in future MEM-related events.

The mission team takes note of the explanation that Antigua and Barbuda could not meet the deadlines stipulated in the MEM evaluation process as this process coincided with national elections and subsequently with a period of adaptation by the new authorities. This in turn hampered responses to the indicators that are part of the evaluation mechanism's questionnaire and prevented the necessary dialogue between the GEG and the national coordinating entity, at that time, the National Drug Council (NDC).

The mission team recognizes the guidance and leadership of Mr. Hilson Baptiste, Minister of Housing, Culture and Social Transformation, in reformulating the National Anti-Drug Plan of Antigua and Barbuda and in encouraging the full participation of the various national entities in the different stages of MEM.

The mission team appreciates the interest of all the respective authorities and agencies in participating actively in the MEM process as in the previous rounds of the Mechanism.

The mission team views with satisfaction the commitment to improve coordination and communication among the entities responsible for efficiently responding to the requirements arising from the next MEM evaluation rounds. In this regard, the role of the National Coordinating Entity (NCE) for this process shall be the responsibility of Mr. Alec Vanderpoole, Director of the Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy (ONDCP) and the new Commissioner of Antigua and Barbuda to CICAD, appointed during the in-situ visit.

H. Final Considerations

The first in-situ visit has been a significant experience for the GEG experts who formed part of the mission team. The visit proved to the experts the difficulty in reflecting the complex reality of a country in the MEM evaluations and corresponding reports, together with the difficulty in assigning recommendations that are truly relevant to that reality and which would stimulate progress of the countries' anti-drug policies.

In this regard, it is important to emphasize for future rounds of the MEM, that the countries should include introductory reports in order to provide to the GEG the context in which the drug strategy is being developed, the priorities defined in the framework of said strategy and the main difficulties being faced by the country, among other aspects. This introductory report should constitute the framework on which experts can bring together the specific characteristics of the country and embody them in the final evaluation report.

Finally, the mission team wishes to underscore the usefulness of this type of visit in cases when insufficient information has been provided by a country, as in the case of Antigua and Barbuda , and when it is not possible to make a judgment on the progress in the fight against drugs in a given country.

Tuesday, 16th August 2005

- 9:00 am **Official welcome by the Hon. Hilson N. Baptiste**
Minister of Housing, Culture & Social Transformation
- 9:30 am **Meeting with National Drug Council (NDC)**
Mr. Clarence E. Pilgrim – Chairman & other Representatives
Conference Room – Ministry of Housing, Culture & Social Transformation
- 11:00 am **Meeting with the Honourable Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Baldwin Spencer
and the Cabinet Ministers of Antigua & Barbuda**
Prime Ministers Office
- Presentation by Ambassador James Mack - Executive Secretary
Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)
Organization of American States
Question and Answers Session
- 12:15 pm **Meeting with Permanent Secretary (James Mack)**
Ambassador Colin Murdoch - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 1:00 pm **Lunch for visiting team**
Host: Hon. Minister Hilson Baptiste
- 2:30 pm **Meeting with Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy
(ONDCP)**
Mr. Alec Vanderpoole – ONDCP Director and MEM-National Coordinating Entity
for Antigua and Barbuda
- 3:30pm **Meeting with Senator the Hon. Edmond Mansoor (James Mack)**
Minister of State attached to the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for
Information, Broadcasting, Telecommunications
- Meeting with Ministry of Agriculture (GEG Experts)**
Pesticides Control Board – Dr. Malverne Spencer
- 4:30 pm **Meeting with Director of Public Prosecution (James Mack)**
Mr. Gene Pestaina
- Meeting with the Superintendent of Prisons (GEG Experts)**
Mr Richard Allen
Her Majesty's Prison

Wednesday, 17th August 2005

- 9: 00 am **Meeting with the Chief Medical Officer**
Dr. Rhonda Sealey-Thomas
Ministry of Health, High Street

- 10:00 am **Meeting with the Commissioner of Police (James Mack)**
 Ms. Delano Christopher
 Police Head Quarters American Road
- Meeting with the Substance Abuse Prevention Unit (GEG Experts)**
 Mrs. Norma Jefferey-Dorset – Substance Abuse Prevention Officer
- 11:00 am **Meeting with Acting Director of Agriculture (James Mack)**
 Mr. Lesroy Grant
- Meeting with Police Department (GEG Experts)**
 Mr. Maclean Hunte, Head of Narcotics Division
- 12:00 pm **Visit to Drug Rehabilitation Facility**
 Crossroads
- 1:00 pm **LUNCH hosted by CROSSROADS**
- 2:00 pm **Meeting with Customs Department**
 Comptroller Raphael Browne
 Ministry of Finance
- 3:00 pm **Press Conference (National media invited)**
Conference Room – Heritage Quay Hotel
 Hon. Hilson Baptiste
 Minister of Housing , Culture & Social Transformation
 Ambassador James Mack
 Executive Secretary, CICAD/OAS
- 4:00 pm **Meeting with OAS National Office**
 Ms. Cecily Norris - Director
 Office of the General Secretariat of the OAS in Antigua and Barbuda

Thursday 18th August 2005

- 9:30 am **MEM awareness workshop**
 Ms. Angela Crowdy
 MEM Coordinator
- Mr. Prim Ritoe
 GEG Expert
 Location: ONDCP Conference Room
- 10:30 Q&A Session
- 12:00 End of Workshop

OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

OBJECTIVES

- To educate society about the dangers of drug abuse
- To encourage the existence of a National Anti-Drug Plan
- To ensure close collaborative linkages between demand and supply reduction
- To ensure enactment and enforcement of legislation on the use of alcohol and other substances of abuse /addictions
- Monitor and evaluate integrated demand reduction programmes
- To prevent the indiscriminate use of licit and illicit substances

FUNCTIONS

To advise the Government in the following areas:

- To advise on measures for the eradication or control of substance use and abuse
- To advise on initiatives for upgrading capacity in probation services and development of Alternatives to Incarceration
- To advise on capacity building in demand reduction
- To advise on standards of care for Drug Treatment Centres and establish minimum standards for accreditation of Treatment and Rehabilitation facilities
- To establish closer links with regional and international agencies responsible for coordinating mechanisms in demand reduction to facilitate collection, analysis and dissemination of epidemiological information and training
- To ensure participation at integrated regional demand and supply reduction meetings
- To develop in collaboration with the NDIC properly formulated culturally appropriate integrated demand reduction structure programmes to improve synergy between education, health, youth, faith based agencies, NGO's, poverty and crime. Create linkages with other programmes such HIV/AIDs, violence
- To advise on the strengthening and support of accredited national institutions which implement components of the integrated demand reduction programmes
- To ensure standardized survey instruments are used periodically

- To establish EAP programmes using ILO manual and facilitate training programmes to include Trade Unions and Public Sector employees, such as land, sea, air workers
- Establish training networks for drug abuse education with possibility of advance level training in Addiction Studies with Certification
- Solicit, receive and manage funds provided by Government, the private sector, private citizens, Regional and International Organizations to support integrated demand reduction programmes
- Prepare and share Annual National report on the drug situation in Antigua and Barbuda