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**INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE
CONTROL COMMISSION**

CICAD

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

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ADDRESS BY THE NEW CHAIR OF CICAD

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CHAIR: GOOD MORNING, AND THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT FOR GUATEMALA TO SERVE AS THE CHAIR OF THIS HONORABLE COMMISSION FOR THE 2014-2015 PERIOD. ON THIS OCCASION, I WOULD LIKE TO REAFFIRM GUATEMALA'S COMMITMENT TO THE ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES THAT CICAD CARRIES OUT.

In June of last year, we adopted the "Declaration of Antigua Guatemala: For a Comprehensive Policy against The World Drug Problem In The Americas." That instrument is now a part of the political framework that defines the road ahead for discussion and debate on the drugs problem in the Americas.

There can be no doubt that the debate has made rapid progress in the Americas. Only a few years ago, it was still taboo to talk about different approaches in dealing with drugs problem. Neither was any consideration given to the idea of seeking to mitigate the negative impact of problem drug use, of ensuring a human rights perspective in policies, or of making the individual, and not the substance, the target of state action. Neither was it possible to suggest alternatives to incarcerating drugs offenders or to review the proportionality of sentences for drug-related crimes. Now, we all agree that the drugs problem is also a public health problem and that dealing with it demands comprehensive policies.

Following the adoption of the Declaration of Antigua, it became clear that the hemispheric consultation process must take place at three levels: at the national level, as decided by each member state; in multidisciplinary subregional groups, without any further definition; and within CICAD, the Meeting of Ministers of Public Security of the Americas (MISPA), with other agencies of the inter-American system, and at special meetings organized by the OAS General Secretariat.

This has allowed significant progress to be made, such as the creation of the CICAD's working group on alternatives to incarceration, which has produced a technical report on the alternatives to custodial sentences that exist for drug-related crimes under each country's regulatory framework and under the Hemispheric Strategy and the 2011-2015 Plan of Action. In addition, we have furthered the discussion on the effects of regulation – from both the legal and economic viewpoints but, above all, from the perspective of public health – and we have conducted exchanges of experiences with countries that have implemented regulated market models.

The resolution of the 2014 special session of the General Assembly in Guatemala, "Reflections and Guidelines to Formulate and Follow up on Comprehensive Policies to Address the World Drug Problem in the Americas," determined:

- To speak *with a single voice* on the global drugs problem, recognizing that it is a single problem with 34 different impacts, manifestations, and expressions, given the different realities of each member state.
- To reformulate the political guidelines for dealing with the global drugs problem in the Americas and, taking into account the three drug control conventions, place people and not substances at the center of that policy.
- To underscore the importance of striking a balance between actions the areas of citizen security, public health, human rights, development, and reconstructing the social fabric.
- To acknowledge the need to review the Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs, in accordance with the new political guidelines.
- To review preconceptions about the problem, emphasizing international cooperation and exchanges of information and good practices, to structure plans that are based on scientific evidence.

- To reduce the levels of impunity with which organized crime groups operate, and to curtail their access to their assets.
- To reduce the levels of social stigmatization faced by those individuals who abuse illegal drugs, and to work on setting conditions for them to embark on or continue with their life plans.
- To explore alternatives to incarceration, establishing proportionality between the crime and the penalty, and to place a higher priority on prevention than on punishment.

All this makes it clear that our actions constitute a step forward of unique importance, a before and an after, in seeking out effective alternatives for tackling the global drugs problem in the Americas.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.