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Remarks Ambassador Adam Namm

Inaugural Session CICAD 61

Sixty-first regular session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD 61)

Ambassador Adam Namm
CICAD Executive Secretary
Washington, D.C., 24 April 2017

- Welcome distinguished Commissioners, delegations from Member States and Permanent Observers, civil society, international organizations, members of the press, OAS colleagues.
- As many of you know, this is my first CICAD regular session, having joined the OAS five months ago after a nearly 30-year career at the U.S. State Department. I am honored to be the Executive Secretary of this distinguished Commission and to work with an outstanding and talented Executive Secretariat team.
- As most of you know, CICAD was without an Executive Secretary for more than a year-and-a-half from the departure of Ambassador Paul Simons in May 2015 to my arrival last December 1. This was a challenging time, and I want to thank Assistant Executive Secretary Angela Crowdy for the outstanding job she did running the Executive Secretariat during that long gap, as well as thank the rest of the Executive Secretariat team for their hard work and perseverance.
- Given that I came aboard at the beginning of December, I unfortunately missed the 60th regular session of CICAD in Nassau. However, I did have the opportunity to travel to Nassau earlier this month for a preparatory meeting. I very much appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Minister of National Security of the Bahamas, Dr. Bernard Nottage, Permanent Secretary Carl Smith, Dr. Chaswell Hanna, Dr. Rolle, and other members of the Bahamian team. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to The Bahamas for its wonderful hospitality and for hosting an interesting and informative meeting schedule. Supply reduction initiatives, support for youth at risk, and drug treatment challenges were among areas highlighted by the CICAD Chair as meriting particular attention – all forming part of the CICAD agenda items for this 61st regular session.
- This CICAD meeting will allow me the opportunity to meet with many distinguished Commissioners over the next three days which I look forward to, and I was fortunate enough to meet with many delegations at the CND meeting in Vienna last month.

- During the Vienna meeting, I presented on key issues that CICAD is working on to help our member states effectively address the various facets of the drug problem and respond to the recommendations contained in the UNGASS outcome document. These themes are not new to our region. Our hemisphere is and has been in the vanguard when it comes to addressing these issues since the formulation and implementation of the 2010 Hemispheric Drug Strategy, through which our member states recognized the global challenge of the drug problem.
- As Executive Secretary, my focus will be on strengthening the capacity of our member states to address the drug problem, which could be referred to in the plural, “drug problems,” as the challenges each member state faces are distinct.
- Through our Drug Control Capacity Building and Technical Assistance Section, CICAD will continue to assist member states in strengthening institutional, technical, and human capabilities for implementation of comprehensive drug control programs, while the Evidence-Based Drug Policy Section will support member states in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of national policies, together with the strengthening of valuable data collection and analysis.
- I would like to recognize the vital role civil society plays in addressing the drug problem, and its invaluable role in the development and implementation of policies and programs. I am not only delighted we are including a three-hour dialogue with civil society today, I feel such interchange is absolutely necessary as all of us search for lasting solutions.
- I place high importance on ensuring that our projects and programs contain a public health, human rights, gender, and development focus. In this regard, we need to continue working on exploring alternatives to incarceration for drug-related crimes; continue strengthening joint CICAD-PAHO actions in the region; craft strategies to minimize the effects of drug production, trafficking, and consumption among high-risk vulnerable populations; and support effective comprehensive and sustainable alternative development policies that guarantee the basic rights of individuals in rural and urban areas.
- Evidence-based policies are key to successfully addressing the drug problem in the Hemisphere, with the formulation of sound indicators being a critical part of the equation. CICAD will continue to assist member countries through the Drug Information Network, which has developed guidelines for indicators based on experience employing drug use surveys in secondary schools, households, treatment centers, universities and prisons.

- Quality research and evaluation are invaluable. Despite all the available research on prevention and treatment programs, for example, a basic and ongoing problem in many of our countries is the widespread lack of solid information with regards to which policies and interventions are working best in the Hemisphere. The current lack of information on the success or failure of policies and programs represents a significant deficiency that hampers efforts to discern which policies and programs to keep in place and which to discard.
- The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism will undertake its seventh round of evaluations next year. My hope is that the deliverables from the MEM's evaluation process will prove a valuable source of reference for the Hemisphere as the world heads toward the 2019 ten-year anniversary of the 2009 UN Political Declaration and Plan of Action.
- Our Executive Secretariat will continue to train health professionals in order to improve the treatment offered to drug dependents, centering activities on the individual as the focus of interventions. I look forward to working with ministries of health, national drug commissions, and civil society in the formulation of public policy related to drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.
- From a supply reduction perspective, CICAD will support member countries through counterdrug intelligence training, technical assistance and information sharing. In the wake of the INCB scheduling two essential fentanyl precursor chemicals, we will work with OAS member states to train officials in identifying and detecting the presence of those and other substances.
- I also plan to look for synergies within the Secretariat of Multidimensional Security and with other OAS secretariats, exploring the formulation of joint projects shared by CICAD and other OAS departments. CICAD has for some time partnered with organizations such as UNODC and the European Union, and has also collaborated with Western Hemisphere institutions such as SICA and CARICOM, so it makes sense to also seek partnerships within the OAS.
- Before I conclude, may I recognize the valuable work undertaken by delegations in the preparation of the Plan of Action on Drugs 2016-2020, approved six months ago at CICAD 60. The Plan is an excellent supporting guide for the 2010 Hemispheric Drug Strategy, and provides a roadmap for member states as well as the Executive Secretariat.
- OAS member states firmly believe in creating space for dialogue – CICAD provides this valuable platform for discussion, the exchange of experiences and best practices. The new paradigm in drug control policy requires all of us to go beyond dialogues and achieve

tangible results. This Executive Secretariat stands ready to assist our member states as we face the challenge together through a holistic, balanced, and multidisciplinary approach, promoting dialogue and cooperation.