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Opening Remarks
Ambassador Adam Namm

OPENING REMARKS – AMB NAMM CICAD 63

Dr. Alberto Elías Beltrán, CICAD Chair and Acting Attorney General of Mexico;

Ambassador Miguel Ruiz Cabañas, Under Secretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights;

Secretary Claudia Paz y Paz, OAS Secretary for Multidimensional Security;

Honorable delegations from OAS member states and observer states, international organizations and agencies, members of civil society, members of the press, ladies and gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission Executive Secretariat, to the sixty-third regular session of CICAD. This is my first CICAD session outside of headquarters in Washington, and I thank Mexico for the warm welcome and hospitality my staff and I have received since our arrival.

Many of us were present at the 61st session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs last month in Vienna, and, with Mexico in the Chair, we heard the discussions related to the implementation of the 2009 UN Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and follow-up to the 2016 Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the World Drug Problem, or UNGASS 2016. Given the regional significance of the outcome document, “Our Joint Commitment to Effectively Addressing and Countering the World Drug Problem,” I applaud Mexico’s initiative to form a working group on the UNGASS recommendations within the framework of CICAD to continue the

dialogue within this Hemisphere, and develop a unified discourse as the region prepares for the 2019 high-level CND session. Yesterday's initial meeting of the working group was a great success from my perspective, a perspective I know is shared by many in this room.

From CICAD's standpoint, the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism - now in its 7th round and celebrating its 20th anniversary - is currently gathering information from member states on how the region is implementing the Plan of Action on Drugs 2016-2020, which incorporated many of the UNGASS 2016 operational recommendations into its text. This new MEM round is taking into account not only the 2016 UNGASS operational recommendations, but also the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda, and covers a range of issues related to gender, human rights, social inclusion, early warning systems, new psychoactive substances, exchange of information, and best practices. The MEM reports, to be presented in the spring of 2019, will be a valuable deliverable from this Hemisphere to the UNGASS process.

One of the cross-cutting themes within our Plan of Action, as well as UNGASS 2016, is the issue of gender. As we are all aware, gender inequality persists worldwide, depriving women and girls of their basic rights and opportunities. Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls requires more vigorous efforts, including legal frameworks, to counter deeply rooted gender-based discrimination.

In this regard, I am pleased to refer to CICAD's Inter-American Program for Strengthening Gender Equality in Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (known by

the acronym, GENLEA), responding to international and hemispheric recommendations to incorporate a gender perspective into all stages of the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of drug policies and programs. The program commenced in February of this year, and is aimed at addressing the need to increase member states' capacities for dismantling criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking, by emphasizing gender mainstreaming as a factor that improves performance in counter-drug intelligence operations. Thanks to Canada for providing funding for GENLEA, which is an important companion to our ongoing counterdrug intelligence training at regional schools in Bogota and Port-of-Spain.

I wrote CICAD Commissioners in February, requesting support to gather key information on existing gender gaps within drug law enforcement agencies in the Western Hemisphere, and the progress made so far to close those gaps and the work needed to further bridge the gaps. May I take this opportunity to thank the valuable inputs sent by Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Paraguay. Additional responses from other member states are still welcome. I would also like to highlight the support of Chile, Costa Rica, Trinidad & Tobago, and Colombia, for having organized meetings and interviews that allowed us to collect best practices on the subject.

Turning to another of our significant programs, I also wish to thank the Government of Mexico for its leadership on therapeutic justice issues, which is of significant interest to many OAS member states. For example, while only four OAS countries had drug treatment courts five years, today that number is

up to 14, with more member states interesting in instituting such a program. This is in large part due to the large body of scientific evidence supporting their effectiveness in reducing recidivism among drug-dependent people in conflict with the law, while also providing them with a voluntary alternative to incarceration.

In the last several years, Mexico and CICAD worked together to create pilot treatment court programs in five Mexican states, which are part of a broader Mexican therapeutic justice effort that includes programs such as primary diversion. In 2016, that effort also yielded the first methodological guide to Mexican treatment courts, thanks in part to people who are present here today. Additionally, just this February, the National Security Council, which is chaired by the President of Mexico, called for the expansion and consolidation of this therapeutic justice program throughout the entire Mexican federation. This leadership is already being recognized throughout the Hemisphere as a model of implementing evidence-based alternatives to incarceration to reduce crime.

Within demand reduction, CICAD continues to support a public health approach among member states to ensure evidence-based prevention policies, programs, and treatment services for problematic drug use and dependence. We continue to provide technical assistance and systematic training and certification to prevention and treatment service providers and professionals within the national health systems, and are currently working with universities to support research, training, networking, and collaborative initiatives within the drug prevention and treatment fields. CICAD is also

working jointly with PAHO and UNODC in supporting member states with the implementation of quality rights and quality assurance standards grounded in science, health, and human rights.

A key issue in our Hemisphere, which has been discussed in previous CICAD sessions, is how to link information and the development of drug policy. CICAD is addressing this issue through its seminar for observatories, one which was held earlier this month in Guyana for the Caribbean. The policy-making process will also be a key feature at a similar workshop for Latin American observatories in Guatemala August 7-9, and I encourage member states' participation at this forthcoming event. I would also like to highlight a future publication from CICAD's Inter-American Observatory on Drugs: The Report on Drug Use in the Americas 2018, which we look forward to launching in November of this year. The report will present a comprehensive analysis of the data the OID receives from the national drug observatories in member states. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the national drug commissions and their respective national drug observatories for their collaboration in this endeavor.

None of this possible would be possible without financial support. Approximately ninety percent of the CICAD Executive Secretary's funding is from specific fund contributions, with the remaining 10% from the OAS Regular Fund. Many thanks to major donors the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and Spain, as well as to Argentina, Chile and Trinidad & Tobago for recent donations. Thank you also to the many member states that provide valuable in-kind contributions.

I look forward to presenting this Commission with a more detailed 2018 work plan on Friday, and reiterate our commitment to assist our member states in strengthening drug policies by conducting in-depth research, evaluation, data collection and analysis on drug-related issues and emerging trends; providing effective technical assistance and specialized training focused on capacity building; and always keeping in mind this Hemisphere's commitment to a public health and human rights approach to the drug problem, focusing on individuals.

Thank you.