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**INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE
CONTROL COMMISSION**

CICAD

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

**GROUP OF EXPERTS ON CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES
AND PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS
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**DRAFT FINAL REPORT
GROUP OF EXPERTS ON CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES
AND PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS**

I. BACKGROUND

The Group of Experts on Chemical Substances and Pharmaceutical Products of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD/OAS) is the technical forum at the hemispheric level for member states to exchange information, expertise, and best practices on the control of precursor chemicals used in the production of illicit drugs.

During the fifty-eighth regular session of CICAD, held in Trujillo, Peru, November 11-13, 2015, the Commission approved the final report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Chemical Substances and Pharmaceutical Products that took place in Quito, Ecuador, July 15-17, 2015, including the group's recommendations and plan of action ([CICAD/doc. 2203/15rev.1](#)).

During the fifty-ninth regular session of CICAD, held in Washington, D.C., April 25-26, 2016, Panama submitted its candidacy to chair the group, and the Commission approved the motion.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Group of Experts on Chemical Substances and Pharmaceutical Products met in Panama City, Panama, May 29-31, 2018. The meeting featured the participation of 15 member States (Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States of America). Spain was also present as OAS Permanent Observer, as well as the following international/regional organizations: the European Commission, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC-Colombia).

As established in the schedule of activities ([QUIM/doc.1/18](#)), the meeting started with a roundtable which provided delegations with an opportunity to identify the main challenges they face, as well as best practices that their institutions have implemented on the matter. After the roundtable, panels and presentations took place on the following topics:

- Capacity to detect and dismantle clandestine synthetic drugs laboratories, including fentanyl and its analogues;
- Voluntary cooperation agreements between national chemical substance control agencies and the private sector: national experiences and best practices;
- Chemical precursors and synthetic drugs control efforts by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), and its collaboration with the Universal Postal Union;
- The role of forensic laboratories in the control of synthetic drugs, including NPS and their chemical precursors;
- Cooperation and engagement strategies between producer and recipient countries of chemical precursors, and the role of the Experts Group as advisory body to the Executive Secretariat of CICAD;
- Production, recycling and diversion of main chemical precursors used to manufacture synthetic and plant-based drugs in the region;
- Conclusions of the ~~SECRET~~

Further to the presentations and panels, two working groups were formed to discuss and share information on the following matters:

- **Working Group 1:** Enhance OAS Member States' forensic technical capacities to strengthen the control of synthetic drugs, including NPS and their chemical precursors.
- **Working Group 2:** Increase international cooperation to strengthen the control of precursor chemicals among producers and importing countries, to prevent their diversion without affecting the legal/commercial market.

This final report will be presented to the Commission during its sixty-fourth regular session, to be held in Washington D.C., United States, November 19-21, 2018.

III. MINUTES

INAUGURAL SESSION

09:00-09:30

Opening remarks by:

- Ambassador Pedro Vuskovic Céspedes, Representative, OAS National Office in Panama
- Mr. Rolando Rodríguez, Secretary General, Attorney General's Office, Panama
- Ambassador Adam Namm, Executive Secretary, Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD/OAS)

Ambassador Pedro Vuskovic Céspedes, OAS representative in Panama, highlighted efforts carried out by CICAD to address the drug problem in the hemisphere, and stressed the importance of the cooperation among member states, both nationally and internationally, to counter the issue. Mr. Vuskovic stated the need to adopt an approach to drug and chemical precursor control that takes into account human rights and sustainable development, as well as the need to incorporate scientific evidence in the development of drug policies. Finally, he urged delegates to take advantage of the meeting to share best practices and apply them at the national level, when appropriate.

Mr. Rolando Rodríguez, Secretary General, Attorney General's Office, Panama, noted how the emergence of NPS, and the traffic and commercialization of those substances, constitute global issues impacting every country in the hemisphere. Mr. Rodríguez stated that the Republic of Panama, much like other countries in the region, should increase capacity-building initiatives and tools to enable forensic laboratories to respond more effectively to the threats posed by the growing availability of illicit synthetic drugs. For that reason, he suggested delegates strive to develop real, creative methods to help prevent the abuse, traffic, and distribution of said substances.

Ambassador Adam E. Namm, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD/OAS), stated that since the last meeting of the Group of Experts, the hemisphere has witnessed a concerning number of emerging threats, trends and challenges with respect to the control of chemical substances and pharmaceutical products. Ambassador Namm emphasized the importance of greater and more systematic information exchange and cooperation among member

states. He also highlighted the importance of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), which helps CICAD member states measure their progress of the objectives established in the 2016-2020 Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs, as well as identify deficiencies that need to be addressed.

FIRST PLENARY SESSION

10:00-10:15

Information briefing by the Executive Secretariat of CICAD

- Mr. Rafael Parada, Chief, Supply Reduction Unit, CICAD/OAS

Mr. Rafael Parada stated that precursor chemical diversion used in the production of illicit drugs is increasing at the domestic level, given the growth of illicit production of key precursors in the region. He also highlighted that forensic capacities to identify seized psychoactive substances are limited in many member states. Finally, Mr. Parada emphasized the importance of efforts by member states in increasing cooperation, as well as the coordination between public and private entities.

10:15-11:30

Roundtable: Emerging threats in the international control of chemical precursors, synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS)

- Moderator: Ana Alvarez, Specialist, Supply Reduction Unit, CICAD/OAS

During the roundtable, delegates had the opportunity to introduce themselves, and briefly comment on the work undertaken by their institutions to strengthen the control of chemical precursors, synthetic drugs, and NPS. Likewise, delegates identified major challenges their countries face concerning the issue, measures implemented to tackle them, and initiatives that could be put in place with the technical support of the ES/CICAD to strengthen capacities and offer effective responses.

The most cited challenges were: difficulties in identifying NPS and their rapid emergence; lack of forensic capacities and technical knowledge on said substances; challenges in the disposal of seized chemical precursors; the fact that these new substances do not receive proper attention from governments. Likewise, delegates mentioned the difficulty of implementing national legislation on the subject; problems related to border control; lack of indicators to assess the real situation of the problem in each country; and lastly ease of access to synthetic drugs through the internet, including social networks.

In terms of successful measures and “best practices”, several delegations highlighted addressing the problem from a multi-institutional and multidisciplinary perspective. Inter-agency coordination, both at the national and regional level, was also noted as an important practice to achieve progress. In addition, delegations highlighted the importance of government collaboration with the private sector.

During interventions, delegates also suggested measures on how the ES/CICAD could support member states through capacity-building and technical assistance to existing forensic laboratories in the region, as well as in the implementation and improvement of early warning systems to identify NPS. Likewise, participants expressed their interest in products developed by the Group of Experts, which constitutes a valuable space for the exchange of experiences, best practices, and information at the regional and international levels.

11:30-12:30

Presentations/discussion: Capacity to detect and dismantle clandestine synthetic drugs laboratories, including fentanyl and its analogues

- **Mr. Hector Hernando Bernal**, Chemical Expert, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Colombia
- **Mr. Aziz Elkholy**, Staff Coordinator, Synthetic Drugs and Chemicals Section, Diversion Control, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), United States of America
- **Mr. Patricio Navarro Poblete**, Chief, Department of Controlled Chemical Substances Investigations, Investigations Police (PDI), Chile

Mr. Hector Hernando Bernal ([QUIM/doc.3.1/18](#))¹ focused his presentation on the characteristics of, and interventions against, clandestine laboratories for the illicit production of drugs of natural origin. He noted that a safe and responsible operation against such illicit production infrastructure should include the proper risk analysis associated with the types of infrastructure involved, as well as biosafety and environmental security measures.

Mr. Aziz Elkholy² presented on the DEA’s experience with regard to the detection and dismantling of clandestine laboratories in which synthetic drugs are produced. Mr. Elkholy indicated that such laboratories may be found virtually anywhere, and consequently, detection and intervention teams must always be alert and especially trained and equipped. With regard to detentions, Mr. Elkholy mentioned the importance of confidential sources (informants), neighbor complaints, suspicious purchases of chemical products, and the information obtained from analyzing suspicious waste. The presenter further mentioned good practices in the dismantling of the clandestine laboratories, taking into consideration the threat level of each situation.

During the final presentation of the panel ([QUIM/doc.3.3/18](#)), **Mr. Patricio Navarro** shared Chile’s experience with methods for identifying drugs and chemicals on-site. Mr. Navarro highlighted the tools that the Investigations Police (PDI) uses, such as “Raman”, which allow police officers and forensic analysts to identify chemical precursors and adulterants in a quick and non-destructive manner.

Comments by delegations

UNODC Colombia: mentioned a survey of forensic capabilities conducted in Chile a number of years prior, and recognized the evolution in that country’s technical skillset and specialized equipment. UNODC further acknowledged that technological advancements are not always as effective when dealing with finished products and that, therefore, forensic analysis remains a necessity. The delegate referenced protocols the United Nations is developing for the efficient usage of “Raman” technology.

SECOND PLENARY SESSION

14:00-15:00 **Presentations/discussion: Conclusions of the Second Regional Meeting on New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) in the Western Hemisphere**

- **Ms. Renata de Morais Souza**, Manager of the Controlled Substances Office

¹ Available only in Spanish.

² Presentation not available per request of the presenter.

at the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA), Brazil

- **Ms. Melinda Mancebo**, Laboratory and Scientific Section, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Vienna, Austria

Ms. Renata de Moraes Souza presented ([QUIM/doc.4.1/18](#))³ the conclusions of the Second Regional Meeting on New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) in the Western Hemisphere, convened by UNODC in Brasilia, Brazil, May 15-17 2018. During the meeting, relevant topics were discussed concerning new trends involving NPS, as well as early warning systems and legal issues. Additionally, three working groups were created to tackle the following issues: i. detection and identification of NPS, ii. early warning systems, and iii. legal approaches on NPS.

Ms. Melinda Mancebo made a video presentation ([QUIM/doc.4.2/18](#)) on recent activities undertaken by the Laboratory and Scientific Section of UNODC with the objective of strengthening the existing forensic systems in a significant number of countries. Specific aspects being improved include the development of easily available and clear forensic regulations; high-quality forensic data; and forensic professionals who operate according to internationally accepted standards. Ms. Mancebo further referenced materials published by UNODC, such as a new guidelines for the safe handling and disposal of chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs, a multi-lingual dictionary of internationally controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as initiatives such as the “International Collaborative Exercise –ICE” and the “Global Smart Program”⁴.

Comments by delegations

UNODC Colombia: reported that UNODC Colombia is preparing an international conference on technical and forensic aspects of NPS to strengthen regional forensic laboratories in NPS-related issues, through the exchange of experiences, information, and casework on the subject among forensic chemists.

15:00-16:00 **Presentations/discussion: Voluntary cooperation agreements between national chemical substance control agencies and the private sector: national experiences and best practices**

- **Mr. Gustavo A. Castro Valverde**, Precursor drugs section, Intelligence Center for Counter-Terrorism and Organized Crime (CITCO), Spain
- **Mr. Alberto Miguel Guzman**, Executive Director, Narcotics, Psychotropic and Chemical Substance Regulation, Federal Commission for the Protection against Sanitary Risk, Secretariat of Health, Mexico
- **Ms. Gabrielle Bazile**, Drug Enforcement Commission (CONALD), Haiti

Mr. Gustavo Castro presented ([QUIM/doc.5.1/18](#)) on voluntary cooperation agreements and suspicious transaction monitoring systems between the public and private sectors in Spain. The presenter noted that one of the country’s challenges on the topic involves controlling access to “substitute” chemicals. He explained how, in an effort to impede illicit access to chemical precursors,

³ Presentation available only in English.

⁴ Visit UNDC website: www.unodc.org/unodc/en/scientists/publications.html.

all companies in Spain are required to register in a general operator database, and to comply with the Voluntary Cooperation Agreement, which addresses obligations on the part of businesses that import or export chemical substances included in tables I and II.

Mr. Alberto Miguel Guzman discussed ([QUIM/doc.5.2/18](#)) voluntary cooperation agreements involving national chemical substance control authorities and the private sector. Mr. Guzman, in referring to national experiences and identified good practices, specifically mentioned the agreement signed in Mexico in 2015 with the purpose of avoiding a negative impact on the country's chemical industry. The objective of the agreement is to define actions involving the control and sanitary surveillance of chemicals included in the area of responsibility of each participant, as well as promoting a proactive and positive attitude on the subject.

Ms. Gabrielle Bazile shared Haiti's experience ([QUIM/doc.5.3/18](#))⁵ with voluntary cooperation agreements between national chemical substance control agencies and the private sector. The presenter commented on the lack of forensic capabilities in her country, as well as the need to strengthen the Department of Pharmacy and Medicine, which currently lacks basic materials such as masks and gloves. She noted that in addition to equipment, it is also necessary to strengthen the capabilities of forensic technicians dealing with the issue, and encouraged CICAD and UNODC to explore the possibility of providing training and support to her country in improving its forensic capabilities.

Comments by delegations

UNODC Colombia: asked the presenter from the Mexico delegation if the country has managed to implement mechanisms that can facilitate the determination of the potential demand for chemical precursors in the manufacture of methamphetamines. Further, he asked which of the three ways in which criminal organizations obtain chemical precursors is prevalent in Mexico: diversion from legal industries; substance smuggling; or illegal production. Lastly, he requested the presenter for information on the outcomes of cases that have gone through Mexico's judiciary system.

Mr. Alberto Miguel Guzman: with regard to production estimates, the presenter noted how companies in the industry are required to deliver production forecasts for the succeeding calendar year. If a given company asks for a quantity that has no logical justification, the authorities act immediately.

As part of the Mexico delegation's response, the representative of the Mexican Federal Police confirmed that there are currently no production estimates available. She added that the illicit manufacture of chemical precursors is a problem that has been identified in the country.

With regard to judicial processes, the delegate from Mexico's Office of the Attorney General (PGR) reported that efforts are currently being channeled through an application that systematizes information and facilitates cooperation across the various participating government authorities.

Delegation of Honduras: noted that in 2009 Honduras also banned pseudoephedrine and ephedrine.

⁵ Presentation available only in English.

Delegation of Peru: mentioned that its regulations on pseudoephedrine changed in 2007. Asked for clarification on whether in Mexico, pharmaceutical laboratories initially opposed said measures.

Delegation of Mexico (representative of the Federal Police): replied that prohibition was gradual: first the number of allowed imports was reduced, distribution channels were decreased, and availability in pharmacies was reduced. Finally, pseudoephedrine was replaced with phenylephrine. The local industry initially questioned these decisions, but the rationale behind the measures was explained and ultimately an understanding was reached.

ES/CICAD: following up on the dialogue, asked which substances are being used to manufacture methamphetamine in the aftermath of the ban on pseudoephedrine.

Delegation of Mexico (representative from the Federal Police): responded indicating other non-regulated chemical substances are being used, such as benzaldehyde, formaldehyde, and morpholine.

Delegation of El Salvador: noted how, just like Honduras, El Salvador banned pseudoephedrine and ephedrine through a gradual process that involved raising awareness among pharmaceutical laboratories.

16:15-17:00

Presentations/discussion: Chemical precursors and synthetic drugs control efforts by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), and its collaboration with the Universal Postal Union

- **Mr. Reiner Pungs**, Precursors Control Section, International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)
- **Ms. Nadia Levy Popp**, Overview of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), Federal Police, Mexico

Mr. Reiner Pungs began his presentation ([QUIM/doc.6.1/18](#))⁶ by indicating that the problem of chemical precursors and synthetic drugs is on the rise. He underlined how new fentanyl variants and analogues are emerging in markets around the region, which suggests it is no longer a problem exclusive to the United States. According to the presenter, scheduling is an important step, but an insufficient one in keeping up to date with emerging substances, which are often hazardous. He also mentioned how the internet, both the “dark net” and the “open net”, provide a space in which these substances can be easily and independently bought and sold. He highlighted how the majority of the supply of fentanyl and its analogues originates in the Asian continent. Mr. Pungs also referred to the hazard involved in shipping these dangerous substances through postal services, while also emphasizing cooperation between industries and governmental agencies is key. Lastly, the presenter referenced the “~~BB~~ ~~4B~~ ~~5~~” program, which is focused on combating the illicit production and distribution of opioids.

Ms. Nadia Levy presented ([QUIM/doc.6.2/18](#)) an overview of NPS in Mexico, and discussed an investigation designed to identify the supply of said substances offered via the Internet. The operation

⁶ Presentation available only in English.

revealed that NPS are being offered openly on networks such as Facebook, while shipments were documented originating in China, the Netherlands, and Spain, as well as shipments from Mexico to Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile. 99% of transactions were coordinated through the open net, and paid for via credit cards and wire transfers. The presenter also mentioned that in these particular cases no presence of organized criminal entities was detected.

Comments by delegations

Delegation of Brazil: noted how Brazil, much like other countries in the region, faces a growing problem in the emergence of NPS. Further mentioned how difficult it is for governments to dedicate significant resources to increase controls over NPS, given that they are mostly dedicated to combating traditional drugs, and that many officials believe NPS do not yet represent a severe issue in either his country or the region.

Wednesday, May 30

THIRD PLENARY SESSION

09:00-10:00 **Presentations/discussion: The role of forensic laboratories in control of synthetic drugs, including NPS and its chemical precursors**

- **Mr. Hector Hernando Bernal**, Chemical expert, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Colombia
- **Ms. Michelle Nasseir**, Forensic Expert, Forensic Science Centre, Trinidad and Tobago
- **Ms. Mônica Paulo de Souza**, Forensic Expert, Federal Police, Brazil
- **Ms. Livia Eliasova**, Representative, European Union Delegation to Panama

Within the framework of UNODC's program on preventing the diversion of chemical precursors in the Latin American and Caribbean Region (PRELAC), **Mr. Hector Hernando Bernal** ([QUIM/doc.7.1/18](#)) presented an assessment of the operational, logistical, technical and administrative capacities of sixteen (16) forensic laboratories dealing with synthetic drugs and chemical precursor investigations in Argentina, Panama, Chile, Guatemala and Colombia. This survey identified the need to strengthen technology, provide greater technical and specialized training on NPS issues, and the need to create sample exchange networks between laboratories.

Ms. Michelle Nasseir ([QUIM/doc.7.2/18](#))⁷ presented on the role forensic laboratories play in controlling synthetic drugs, with a focus on toxicology and forensic chemistry. The presenter noted how said drugs are no longer produced nor consumed in traditional ways, given that toxicological analyses are increasingly detecting changes in seized samples. Ms. Nasseir also presented on the challenges NPS presents to Trinidad and Tobago, including the lack of surveillance and reporting, the difficult task of detecting the drug through usual drug-screening methods, and its unpredictable effects and unknown properties. Lastly, the presenter highlighted the importance of early warning systems and how laboratories should periodically report their findings to the authorities.

⁷ Presentation available only in English.

Ms. Mônica Paulo de Souza, ([QUIM/doc.7.3/18](#))⁸, explained the role of forensic laboratories in controlling synthetic drugs in Brazil. She noted how many forensic laboratories lack the necessary equipment to identify synthetic drugs and thus these substances have to be shipped to the central laboratory in Brasilia for analysis. Ms. de Souza shared the experience her country has had with two specific NPS cases, and the corresponding lessons learned. According to the presenter, greater training and information exchange efforts are needed in order to tackle the problem in her country.

Lastly, **Ms. Livia Eliasova** presented ([QUIM/doc.7.4/18](#)) on projects related to drugs and citizens' security that the European Union carries out throughout the Americas, including regional and sub-regional projects. She mentioned how said initiatives are primarily focusing their efforts on assisting police, judicial, and penal systems in countering drugs; enhancing security at ports and airports; and combating cybercrime. Lastly, she highlighted the interest of the European Union in the development of a survey to identify the capabilities of forensic laboratories in the Caribbean, and thanked CICAD for taking the leadership on said proposal in its efforts to strengthen technical and institutional capabilities related to the issue in the region.

Comments by delegations

Delegation of Chile: asked the delegates from Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago about the way in which the samples are sent physically.

In her response, **Ms. De Souza** explained that this varies, highlighting the importance of existing legal agreements with postal systems, which allow for the samples to be sent in a safe and appropriate manner.

Delegation of Brazil: mentioned that a number of techniques are necessary to identify NPS, so controlling such substances require collective efforts from different teams with specialized training.

UNODC Colombia: explained that if a substance is shipped from one laboratory to another without knowing what substance it is, the act could be considered a drug trafficking offense, given the possibility that an illicit drug is being shipped. He highlighted how shipments of samples via postal services should be taken very seriously, emphasizing that it is necessary to develop protocols and mechanisms to facilitate the transportation of those substances, which could constitute evidence in a judicial process.

10:00-11:00 **Presentations/discussion: Cooperation and engagement strategies between producer and recipient countries of chemical precursors, and the role of the Experts Group as advisory body to the Executive Secretariat of CICAD**

- **Mr. Aziz Elkholy**, Staff Coordinator, Synthetic Drug and Chemicals Section, Diversion Control, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), United States of America
- **Mr. Steven Appleby**, Joint Interagency Task Force West (JIATF West), United States of America

⁸ Presentation available only in English.

- **Mr. Harry Matz**, Senior Adviser, Department of Justice, United States of America

Mr. Aziz Elkholy presented ([QUIM/doc.8.1/18](#)) on cooperation and engagement with private industry. He added that instead of making trade harder for industry, governments should look at them as partners to regulate precursor chemicals. Mr. Elkholy also noted that providing industries with information on best practices through websites, call centers and trainings is extremely important.

Mr. Steven Appleby stressed the importance of monitoring containers, but emphasized the magnitude of the challenge due to the massive amount of information to process. He also mentioned the main challenges for JIATF West, which included the large amount of chemicals moving through its area of responsibility, noting the fact that many of them are not controlled under international standards. Finally he indicated that a large amount of chemicals and synthetic drugs are arriving from Asia, especially China, so pursuing collaborative relationships with that region is fundamental to finding effective solutions.

Mr. Harry Matz highlighted the need to strengthen cooperation between producer and recipient countries in order to combat the diversion of chemical precursors, mentioning that most countries in the Americas are recipient countries. He posed three questions to the delegates: i. what data on chemical shipments their countries are gathering; ii. whether shipment-specific information is being gathered, and whether it is useful and timely; iii. if there is data on trends and identified anomalies.

Comments by delegations

Delegation of Bolivia: commented on the lack of information of chemical substances that are shipped and can be used as precursors in the manufacture of illicit drugs.

Delegation of Brazil: noted that ANVISA, along with the Federal Police, is responsible for the control of chemical precursors, but does not monitor substances that are not controlled.

Delegation of Chile: stressed that the export notifications of chemical substances in the country of origin must be verified together with the import notifications made by the receiving country, in order to detect the illicit transport of controlled substances.

Delegation of Spain: raised the challenges arising in the destruction of chemical products, both in terms of environmental impact and costs. Lastly, consulted other delegates on administrative and judicial procedures employed in cases in which large seizures were made.

Delegation of Honduras: indicated the government is looking for chemical disposal alternatives, as well as collaboration with private companies, concerning incineration, which is the most common method in the region for destroying chemical precursors.

Delegation of El Salvador: noted that sometimes in the country seized assets were incinerated via private companies, with funds provided by the Attorney General's Office.

Delegation of Guatemala: pointed out that as part of its seized precursor chemicals disposal strategy

the country uses an incinerator, and added that the government has developed a collaborative relationship with the private sector. Lastly, the delegation noted the importance of coordinating actions at the regional level on the issue, given that it is a shared challenge.

11:15-12:30 **Presentations/discussion: Production, recycling and diversion of main chemical precursors used to manufacture synthetic and plant-based drugs in the region**

- **Colonel Víctor Hugo Tuesta Castro**, Narcotics Section, National Police, Peru
- **Mr. Melvin Rosales**, Deputy Director for Investigations and Analysis of Illicit Substances at the Fifth Antinarcotics Vice Ministry, Guatemala
- **Ms. Carmen Batres de Gracias**, Coordinator, Substance Control Section, Executive Direction, National Drug Enforcement Commission, El Salvador
- **Mr. Reiner Pungs**, Precursors Control Section, International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

Colonel Víctor Hugo Tuesta indicated that in Peru cocaine related drugs (both their production and consumption) constitute the main issue involving plant-based drugs. He added the main chemical precursor used is acetone, although usage of potassium permanganate has increased recently. The delegate added that while synthetic drugs are not widely present in his country, a certain level of consumption has been detected, including MDMA, MDA, and methamphetamines.

Mr. Melvin Rosales presented ([QUIM/doc.9.2/18](#)) a list of the drugs and precursors that are most often seized in his country, which recently saw the first detection of a coca plantation in a mountainous region. According to the presenter, clandestine laboratories were also discovered in the area.

Ms. Carmen Batres de Gracias indicated ([QUIM/doc.9.3/18](#)) that one of El Salvador's main strengths concerning drug control is collaboration among national government institutions. The presenter added that, in order to better regulate pharmaceutical products, an online portal has been created for medical doctors to prescribe controlled substances. She added that a similar system to control the sale of chemical precursors is currently in development. Lastly, Ms. Batres de Gracias identified the need for technical assistance and training in order to strengthen existing drug control mechanisms in the country.

Mr. Reiner Pungs from the International Narcotics Control Board presented on the tools used to combat the diversion of precursors at the international level. He claimed countries should try to identify trade patterns and pay attention to anomalies, verify the legitimacy of importers and end-users, and stop shipments when needed. He also said that, while many countries register to PEN (Pre-Export Notification) Online, most of them do not verify their shipments and no follow-up is conducted. Lastly, he highlighted the diversion of chemical substances is possible at all stages of the distribution chain, and that criminal organizations are increasingly more sophisticated and creative in the ways in which they divert these chemicals.

Comments by delegations

Delegation of Ecuador: mentioned that calcium chloride originating in his country is not controlled, and thus is lately the main product seized in Ecuador. In that spirit, he asked whether Peru has any

process in place to control this substance.

Delegation of Honduras: reported that in their country two previously unknown coca plantations were recently detected.

UNODC Colombia: explained that calcium chloride is key for the operation of cocaine hydrochloride clandestine laboratories, and how for that reason it is important to monitor the movements and amounts of the substance in circulation.

Once the panel finished, **Mr. Fernando Chicaiza Cahueñas, representative of the Chemical Unit of the National Police of Ecuador**, was given the floor. He described his country's experience with drug control and chemical substances.

Mr. Patricio Navarro of Chile's Investigations Police presented on a January 2018 case in which sodium cyanide capsules were seized as part of a larger shipment of cocaine base.

FOURTH PLENARY SESSION: WORKING GROUPS

- 14:00-16:00 **Working Group 1:** Enhance OAS member states' forensic technical capacity to strengthen the control of synthetic drugs, including NPS and its chemical precursors
- Working Group 2:** Increase international cooperation to strengthen the control, and prevent the diversion, of precursor chemicals among producer and importing countries - without negatively impacting the legal market and the legitimate use of said substances

During the fourth session, participants split into two working groups for the rest of the day.

Thursday, May 31

FIFTH PLENARY SESSION

During the fifth session, participants continued to interact in the two working groups, segueing into the sixth plenary session.

SIXTH PLENARY SESSION

- 14:00-14:30 **Roundtable: Initiatives and collaboration opportunities to strengthen international chemical precursors control**

During the roundtable, delegations took the floor to complement what they had expressed previously, or to make a statement for the first time, on their technical assistance and training needs to strengthen the control of chemical precursors. Delegates were also invited to suggest possible horizontal cooperation opportunities among member states, as well as synergies with regional and international specialized agencies, including the support of the Executive Secretariat of CICAD.

Comments by delegations

Delegation of Haiti: requested international assistance to strengthen their forensic laboratories, as well as training and equipment.

Delegation of the United States of America: suggested a widening of the mandate of the Group of Experts to formally include NPS and synthetic drugs. Encouraged countries to invoke notification rights, contained in article 12 of the 1988 Convention, so that exporting countries share information on said substances.

14:30-15:15 **Presentation: Group 1 Working Document ([QUIM/doc.10/18](#))**
Presentation: Group 2 Working Document ([QUIM/doc.11/18](#))

The coordinator of each group presented the results of their working sessions to the plenary for comments and feedback by other participants. Coordinators noted all input provided, and will incorporate it in the final version of the document, which will be presented at the LXIV regular session of CICAD, to be held in Washington, D.C. during the month of November.

15:15-15:30 **Conclusions, commitments and recommendations**

- **Mr. Rafael Parada**, Chief, Supply Reduction Unit, CICAD/OAS

The Executive Secretariat of CICAD thanked the working groups and indicated the final report of the meeting will be presented to CICAD during the sixty-fourth regular session of the Commission to be held in Washington, D.C., November 19-21, 2018.