

## **Argentina Opens its First Drug Treatment Court with OAS Support**

October 16, 2013



Argentina opened in October, 2013 in the province of Salta the first Drug Treatment Court (DTC) in the country, in a pilot program developed with the support of the Organization of American States (OAS) through the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). The South American country joined the United States, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Canada, Chile, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Panama, Colombia, the Bahamas and Barbados, among others, in the use of this model for the treatment of drug-related

crimes.

The DTC opened in the Distrito Judicial del Centro de la Provincia, through the Fifth Circuit Court of Guarantees and the Magistrate's Court of the Second Nomination in Transition. These courts will provide alternative criminal proceedings within the justice system for drug dependent offenders.

The Court of Justice of Salta established that those offenders charged with suspended sentences pending evidence they suffer from an addiction and who have committed a misdemeanor may enter the program. Their participation will be voluntary and under court supervision. Treatment will continue for the time for which they had agreed to suspend the sentence and, if successful, the sentence will be erased. The duration of treatment may be extended within pre-established limits.



This model is being implemented in ever increasing number of countries in the Hemisphere thanks to the leadership and commitment of the various OAS member states, and the direct support of the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the OAS. Assigned to the DTC of Salta are the judges Héctor Martínez (Fifth Circuit Court of Guarantees) and Pablo Arancibia (Magistrate's Court of the Second Nomination in Transition). Both were trained in high-level workshops conducted by the CICAD/OAS in March in the province and in July in Washington, DC.

On Friday, October 18, the official ceremony marking the opening was attended by the



following authorities from the province of Salta, among others: Edward Sylvester, Minister of Security; Nestor Enrique Heredia, Minister of Health; Guillermo Alberto Posadas, Chair of the Supreme Court; Pablo López Viñals, Attorney General; Luis Félix Costas, Defender General, and Nestor Ruiz de los Llanos, Director of the Drug Enforcement Administration of the Province. Also in attendance was Antonio Lomba, Acting Head of the

Institution Building Section of CICAD/OAS and the Drug Treatment Courts Program Manager.

The inauguration was held in October to mark the first day of a training workshop organized by the DTC Program for the Americas, which is coordinated by CICAD. 120 professionals, including judges, defense attorneys, treatment providers and prosecutors from the city of Salta and the interior of the province are taking part in the workshop.