



The Commonwealth of The Bahamas

National Anti-Drug Strategy

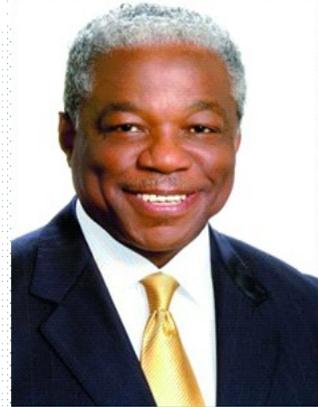
2017 - 2021

Refocusing Our Attention on Those Most Vulnerable
in the World Drug Problem



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Hon. Dr. Bernard Nottage, MP Minister of National Security

I am pleased to present the new National Anti-Drug Strategy for 2017-2021 for the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The illicit drug trade lies at the root of our nation's crime challenges and is a top priority for the Government of The Bahamas. We are determined that drug trafficking, crime and criminality will not endanger the socio-economic development of our country. During the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS) in 2016, nations across the globe agreed that progressive drug policies and strategies should be synergized toward a more appropriate balance between the historical law enforcement approach and a public health approach. As a result, The Bahamas has strategically aligned this new Strategy with such a balance.

The United States, a key strategic partner through its International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) Section and Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), continues to provide funding, training, and technical assistance to local law enforcement and justice sector officials. To complement these partnerships, a number of local initiatives undertaken by our government are discussed in this Strategy.

The Bahamas has also assumed a major leadership role in the hemisphere in the fight against drugs. In November 2016, The Bahamas, for the first time, hosted the 60th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), which is the drug control arm of the Organization of American States (OAS). During this historic occasion, The Bahamas was also elected as Chair of CICAD. This Chairmanship allows The Bahamas to set the hemispheric agenda in drug control over the next five years.

As we turn a new leaf in the fight against drugs, we do so with a renewed focus on those who are among the most vulnerable in the world drug problem; youth. I give my full assurances that The Bahamas is a willing and committed partner.

PREFACE

The National Anti-Drug Strategy 2017-2021 provides the framework for all drug control efforts and activities in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas during the next five years. It was developed with input from local stakeholders inclusive of governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, religious institutions and civil society.

This Strategy was guided by a number of local, regional and international research, reports and documents including the *Drug Situation in The Bahamas – 2015*, the *Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs 2016-2020 (CICAD)*, the *UNGASS Outcome Document 2016*, the *2030 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations)*, and *Solutions to The Murder Problem, 2016*. A number of the goals and objectives outlined in the National Anti-Drug Strategy, 2012-2016 remained in this new Strategy as some were either not fully implemented or were recurring long term objectives.

One of the new features of the new Strategy is a shift in the focus from treating the drug problem as a criminal justice issue, to a public health approach. Key among the overarching objectives is to ensure that our nation's youth – who are among the most vulnerable in the drug problem – are properly educated on all aspects of the issue thereby empowering them to make informed choices about drug use and lead a drug free life.

The implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy will be conducted by the National Anti-Drug Secretariat (NADS), within the Ministry of National Security. NADS remains the principle national entity for building coherence and collaboration among all local, hemispheric and international drug stakeholders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Appreciation is extended to all of the local drug stakeholders including:

The Bahamas National Drug Council
The Bahamas National Drug Agency
The Royal Bahamas Police Force
The Royal Bahamas Defence Force
Bahamas Department of Correctional Services
The Customs Department
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration
The Office of the Attorney General
The Ministry of Education,
The Ministry of Health
The Ministry of Labour
Department of Social Services;
The Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre (Lignum Vitae Unit & Detox-Unit)
The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture,
The Department of Immigration

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This National Anti Drug Strategy for 2017-2021 is a five-year blue print of how drug control activities and policies will be governed in The Bahamas. Particular emphasis is placed on refocusing our attention on youths who are among the most vulnerable in the drug problem. A comprehensive overview of the current drug situation in The Bahamas indicates that the illicit drug trafficking through The Bahamas remains a multi-million dollar enterprise. While local drug use and abuse rates fall under regional averages, the drug trade is one of the root causes of crime and violence locally. The Strategy is organized by five pillars including Institutional Strengthening; Demand Reduction; Supply Reduction; Control Measures and International Cooperation.

Institutional Strengthening

The main objective under this Pillar is to strengthen the National Anti-Drug Secretariat (NADS) within the Ministry of National Security, placing it at a high political level and providing it with the necessary capabilities and competencies to coordinate national drug policies in its stages of formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. NADS is mandated as the principal national body charged with effecting coherence, collaboration and coordination in anti-drug efforts and for implementation of the Strategy, in particular through improvement in its facilities, technical capacity and increase in its staffing tables. NADS will maintain a comprehensive overview of drug control activities of Government Ministries/Agencies, NGOs and community organizations and other entities concerned with drug control. NADS will provide assistance in the development of policies and programs for the prevention of drug abuse, treatment and rehabilitation and supply reduction and related matters;

The Director of NADS is a senior government official and reports to the Minister of National Security through the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Security. NADS is positioned to have an overview of the broad range of national action to counter drug abuse and illicit trafficking, as well as cooperative action taken at the regional and international levels. NADS may, in implementing its mandate, draw on the experience and expertise of a number of existing or soon to be established bodies, strengthened or created to improve the coherence and effectiveness of the country's drug control efforts. Particular emphasis has been placed on setting clear mandates, determining leadership roles, responsibilities, and accountability of these bodies, and expanding the range of partners participating in them.

Demand Reduction

The main objective under this Pillar is to establish demand reduction policies with a public health focus that are evidence-based, multidisciplinary and respectful of human rights considering the guidelines and recommendations of specialized international organizations. In order to guide sound demand reduction policies and programs, there is a need for a household drug prevalence survey. The ground work for a national household survey is underway with support from the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). The completion of this study will be critical in drafting new drug policies in the area of demand. Findings from The Bahamas Secondary School Drug Prevalence Survey, however, found that The Bahamas observed lower prevalence rates in each category of illicit substances namely, marijuana, cocaine and ecstasy. Additionally, The Bahamas' lifetime prevalence rates of illicit drugs was among the lowest regionally compared to combined country totals. Nonetheless, this Strategy will focus on ensuring that this vulnerable population is not forgotten.

The Bahamas National Drug Council (BNDC) was established in 1985 and its principal mandate has been advocacy for drug demand reduction. This task in-cooperates the promotion of healthy drug free lifestyles and the prevention of drug use in schools, workplaces and the community. The BNDC will remain the lead agency for demand reduction, where information will flow between NADS and the BNDC. The scope of demand reduction initiatives will be expanded through collaboration and renewed support for, NGOs and community-based organizations. Particular emphasis will continue to be placed on partnerships with those organizations that have customarily worked in the area of demand reduction, especially those offering residential and transitional facilities to persons with drug dependence.

Supply Reduction

The main objective under this Pillar is to design, implement and strengthen comprehensive and balanced policies and programs, aimed at preventing and decreasing the illicit supply of drugs, in accordance to the territorial realities of The Bahamas and respecting human rights. As previously stated, The Bahamas is not a drug producing country, but remains a transit point for illegal drugs bound for North America and other international markets. The country's proximity to the coast of Florida combined with its location on Caribbean transshipment routes makes it a natural conduit for illicit drug trafficking. The majority of the 700 islands and cays within the Commonwealth of The Bahamas are uninhabited and provide near-ideal conditions for trafficking. Smugglers readily blend in among numerous pleasure craft traveling throughout The Bahamas archipelago, which covers nearly 100,000 square nautical miles. Trafficking also occurs through commercial and private aircrafts. The production, trafficking, use and abuse of illicit narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and associated activities such as murder, firearms trafficking, armed robbery and money laundering present a challenge to the Government of The Bahamas in maintaining law and order for its citizens and visitors.

This Strategy seeks to strengthen agencies with responsibility for detecting, eradicating or reducing the supply of drugs. It is an essential component of a well-balanced strategic approach to drug control. Demand reduction cannot be successful without limiting drug availability. When illegal drugs are readily available, the likelihood of use increases. To advance the Government's position there are a number of agencies mandated with the responsibility of suppressing illegal drugs in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. These include the Royal Bahamas Police Force, the Royal Bahamas Defence Force and the Bahamas Customs Department. All of these agencies recently received significant improvements in infrastructure, human resource development and technical resources. It is vital that these organizations are equipped to carry out their mandate regarding supply reduction. They must also build their capacity in providing a defence to the importation or trafficking of illegal drugs and psychotropic substances. This is achievable through close cooperation and inter-agency coordination of efforts and assets.

Control Measures

The main objective under this Pillar is to adopt and/or strengthen control measures to prevent diversion towards illicit activities of pharmaceutical products containing precursors substances or those containing narcotic drugs and/or psychotropic substances, ensuring the adequate availability and access solely for medical and scientific purposes. The Bahamas National Drug Agency (BNDA) was formed in 1994, under the Ministry of Health, in order to streamline purchasing of medicines for public sector health facilities. After the formation of the Public Hospitals Authority (PHA), the BNDA resumed its functioning under the administrative oversight of the PHA as a 'shared service' unit. The staff of twenty-four (24) professionals, ranging from administrators, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, supply officers and support personnel. It works directly with all PHA and public health pharmacies, and has indirect interaction with various government health programs, including but not limited to HIV/AIDS unit, and the Disease Surveillance unit. It also provides technical assistance to the Customs Department and the Drug Enforcement Unit of the Royal Bahamas Police Force when necessary. Under this new Strategy, the BNDA will be strengthened.

Another key objective of this Pillar includes establishing, updating and strengthening, as appropriate, the legislative and institutional frameworks to counter money laundering derived from drug trafficking. As a country with a long-established financial service industry, The Bahamas' determination to safeguard its banks and other financial institutions from money laundering is reflected in the action to be taken under the Strategy. This is particularly so in the area of drug control, where the Government's objective is to disrupt trafficking networks by preventing them from using the banking and financial system to move money across national borders, and to conceal the proceeds of crime.

The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) was formed in December, 2000 under the Financial Intelligence Unit Act, 2000. This Act outlines the functions and powers of the agency. The FIU is the national centre responsible for receiving, analyzing, obtaining, and disseminating information which relates to the proceeds of crime offences under the Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Terrorism Acts of The Bahamas. The FIU is also the body responsible for co-operation between FIU's in other countries. In June 2001, the FIU became the 54th member of Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units.

Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) are one of the main weapons in the fight against money laundering and other financial crimes that the Royal Bahamas Police Force uses to initiate money laundering investigations. During 2015, the FIU received 205 STRs from financial institutions in The Bahamas, inclusive of company service providers, credit unions, domestic banks, offshore banks, attorney-at-law, trust companies, stock brokers, fund managers and real estate agents for analysis. Under this new Strategy, the FIU will be strengthened to provide increased assistance to associated agencies in the ongoing fight against money laundering and terrorist financing.

International Cooperation

The main objective under this Pillar is to promote and strengthen international cooperation and coordination mechanisms to foster technical assistance, improve exchange of information, experiences, and share best practices on drug policies and related crimes. The drug problem is an issue that impacts most countries in the world, whether as source, transit or consumer nation. Despite significant regional and international efforts to disrupt the transit and supply of illicit drugs and reduce demand, the illegal drug trade remains a hugely profitable enterprise for organized criminals. Internationally, there is growing concern about current drug policies. A number of countries have questioned the usefulness of attempting to deal with drug problems primarily by prohibition, criminalization and penalization of drug users; and are calling for a new focus on actions to reduce the harm caused to the victims of drug related crimes; drug users and others.

Studies have found support for the position that many of the traditional actions taken by the international community are not yielding the desired results. As a result, progressive nations have now shifted to a public health approach in dealing with the world drug problem. During the course of this Strategy, The Bahamas will be a part of this shift and continue to be a committed and supportive partner in addressing the world drug problem through regional, hemispheric and international cooperative initiatives. OPBAT, the *Shiprider* arrangement and the targeted donations of assets and equipment, notably

under Operation Enduring Friendship, are just a few international programs that have positively impacted The Bahamas' anti-drug efforts.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE DRUG SITUATION IN THE BAHAMAS

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Bahamas' drug situation began in the mid to late 1970s, as international drug traffickers began to take advantage of its close proximity to North America and vast open borders. Drug traffickers used the nation as a major transit point for the illicit transshipment of drugs. Cocaine and marijuana were the principal drugs that they moved from their suppliers in South America to their consumer markets in North America and Europe. As shown in the map of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas in Figure 1.1, the country is a sizable archipelagic state in the western Atlantic Ocean. Its islands number approximately 700, its cays 2,000 and its maritime territory is extensive, spanning over 100,000 square nautical miles. In the north, the country's border is with the United States of America, in the south-west with Cuba, in the south with Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and in the south-east with the Turks and Caicos Islands. The strategic location between supply and demand nations makes The Bahamas vulnerable to drug trafficking and is still used by some international drug traffickers today.

Figure 1.1 Popular Drug Trafficking Routes in The Caribbean Region (Source: *The Economist*)



traffickers sought the assistance of locals to help them move drugs through The Bahamas and onto drug consumer markets in North America and Europe. To combat this illegal operation, local law enforcement officials teamed up with the United States and launched Operation Bahamas Turk & Caicos in 1982. Huge quantities of cocaine and marijuana were seized by Bahamian law enforcement in cooperation with regional partners, particularly the United States. Seizures annually totaled in the tons. Seizures of heroin, hashish oil and psychotropic substances, however, were rare.

The fight against drugs began to take on a different form as some of the drugs destined for North America remained in The Bahamas. Some remained as payment to collaborators for facilitation of the illicit drug trade. Nonetheless, local dealing and use began to increase which resulted in a surge in cocaine and crack cocaine abuse, regarded by some experts as a pandemic. The abuse of crack cocaine, in particular, had a negative impact on individuals, communities and the entire country.

The illegal drug trade remains profitable for traffickers who operate in a \$300 billion complex illegal global network. Every year, multi-tons of cocaine and marijuana are trans-shipped by Trans-National Crime Organizations (TNCO). TNCOs make use of progressive technology in a manner analogous to multinational corporations, in areas including communications, computer networking and all available modes of transportation. TNCOs have access to and utilize a wide variety of weapons and weapon technology in the pursuit of illegal ends. Moreover, TNCOs impact governmental institutions, social organizations and the economic foundations of a society. International partnerships including the Operation Bahamas America Turks and Caicos (OPBAT) of 1982 and 'Ship Riders' of 1986 continue to expand the reach of local drug enforcement agencies. Overall, the drug trade is now regarded as one of the root causes of crime in The Bahamas.

DRUG SEIZURES

According to statistics from the Royal Bahamas Police Force's Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU), a total of 15,990.59.lbs of marijuana and 1,543.57.lbs of cocaine were seized during 2015. As indicated in Table 1.1, marijuana seizures decreased by 22% while cocaine seizures increased by 66% compared to 2014 figures. Other types of drugs seized during 2015 included heroin, hashish and ecstasy pills. There was 0.19.lbs of hashish seized in 2015, which represented a notable decrease compared to the 71.1.lbs seized in 2014. There was a notable decrease in the number of ecstasy pills confiscated in 2015 when compared to 2014. Finally, there were no heroin seizures in 2015 compared to 3.4.lbs seized during 2014.

Table 1.1: *National Drug Seizures* 2014 v 2015*

The majority of marijuana and cocaine were seized throughout the Family Islands at ports of entries including docks and harbors. Other types of drugs seizures such as hashish and ecstasy were less frequent and these seizures were exclusively carried out in New Providence.

DRUG SEIZURE TRENDS 2010-2015

Marijuana

Marijuana has been the most common type of illicit drug seized in The Bahamas accounting for more than 79,000.lbs over the past six years. As illustrated in Table 1.2 marijuana seizures initially trended downward to just over 5,400.lbs in 2012 before spiking to more than 20,000 in 2014.

Table 1.2 *Marijuana Seizures 2010-2015*

Cocaine

Cocaine is the second most common type of illicit drug seized in The Bahamas accounting for more than 5,000.lbs. over the past six years. As illustrated in Table 1.3 cocaine seizures remained virtually the same between 2010 and 2012, but notable increases were observed on average between 2013 and 2015. In fact, the 1,543.57.lbs seized in 2015 was the highest during the period.

Table 1.3 *Cocaine Seizures 2010-2015*

Hashish

Hashish, or hash, is a derivative of marijuana which is composed of purified preparations of stalked resin from the cannabis plant. It contains the same active ingredients as marijuana such as tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) but is consumed only by smoking typically in a pipe, vaporizer or joints, where it is normally mixed with tobacco, as pure hashish will not ignite in joints. As illustrated in Table 1.4 there was less than 1.lb of hashish seized in 2015, with the largest amount of 435.lbs seized in 2011.

Table 1.4 *Hashish Seizures 2010-2015*

Heroin

Heroin is a drug that has rarely been seized in The Bahamas over the last six years. As illustrated in Table 1.5 there were no heroin seizures in 2010, 2011, 2013 or 2015. During the period under review, the largest amount of heroin that was sized totaled 9.5.lbs in 2012.

Table 1.5 *Heroin Seizures 2010-2015*

Ecstasy

Ecstasy tablet seizures remained relatively low between 2010 through 2013 with an average of about 54 tablets seized each year. In 2014, however, there was a major seizure when a total of 18,000 tablets were confiscated at the Lynden Pindling International Airport. As illustrated in Table 1.6, this seizure along with other smaller seizures totaled 18,168 tablets in 2014. The 195 tablets sized in 2015 more than doubled the average of 54 during 2010 through 2013.

Table 1.6 *Ecstasy Tablet Seizures 2010-2015*

Marijuana Plants

Marijuana plant discoveries remained relatively low between 2010 through 2013 with an average of about 41,000 plants. In 2014, however, there were several large marijuana field discoveries in which over 290,000 plants were found. Marijuana plant seizures decreased in 2015, accounting for just over 16,000 plants seized.

Table 1.7 *Marijuana Plant Seizures 2010-2015*



Drug Seizures on School Campuses

There were 5 incidents involving drugs on school campuses. One of the incidents occurred on a college campus and the other four occurred on high school campuses. All incidents occurred in New Providence and involved 6 male students.

Marijuana was the type of drug seized and totaled 0.32lbs. Students involved in these incidents were found in possession of small amounts ranging from 1 gram to 7grams.

DRUG ARRESTS

Since 2010, nearly 8,000 arrests have been made locally for drug related offences. In 2015 there were 1,499 persons arrested for various drug offences including possession of dangerous drugs, possession of dangerous drugs with the intent to supply and illegal importation and exportation of dangerous drugs. On average, just over 1,200 persons are arrested each year for drug related offences. As illustrated in Table 1.8, the 1,499 persons arrested in 2015 was the highest number over the last six years. Out of this total, 109 persons were arrested for possession of cocaine; 1,337 arrested for marijuana possession; 4 persons for possession of hashish and 1 person for possession of Ecstasy tablets.

Table 1.8 *Drug Arrests 2010-2015*

Arrestees consisted of 1,330 adult males and 126 females. Juvenile arrestees accounted for 39 males and 4 females. Bahamians made up the majority (93%) of drug arrestees while foreign nationals accounted for the remaining 7%. Bahamians accounted for 1,394 of the arrested persons followed by Americans (73) and Haitians (13). Other nationalities included (10) Jamaicans; (2) Swedes; (1) British; (1) Arabian; (1) Canadian; (1) Dominican (1) Guyanese, (1) Columbian, and (1) Cuban.

DRUG PROSECUTIONS

Since 2010, persons charged and prosecuted for drug related offences were in excess of 6,000. On average, just over 1,000 incidents occurred with over 800 cases being brought before the courts. Between 2010 and 2015, 6,093 drug incidents occurred and a total of 5,004 cases were prosecuted. A total of 1,218 of the 1,499 persons arrested were subsequently charged and answered to charges before local courts. In 2015 there were a total of 1,180 drug incidents which resulted in 956 cases being prosecuted. Drug cases prosecuted in 2015 increased by 9% compared to 2014 totals.

Table 1.9 *Drug Prosecutions 2014 v 2015*

DRUG ADMISSIONS AT THE BAHAMAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Total drug offender admissions refer to the amount of inmates admitted into the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services (BDOCS) for drug offences during the year. Table 1.10 illustrates the breakdown of the total number drug offenders incarcerated at BDOCS over the 2010 – 2015 period. As depicted in Table 1.10, drug admissions have been generally trending downward over the last three years. In 2015, the drug offences admissions slightly decreased from 415 in 2014 to 393, a decrease of 5%.

Table 1.10 *Drug Admissions 2010-2015*

Recidivists & First Offenders

Drug offenders were mostly first time offenders, representing 16% of First Offender population. Additionally, recidivists for drug related offences represented 14% of the total recidivist inmate population.

Drug Admissions by Age Group

Young persons, ranging in ages 18 to 35, were more likely to be incarcerated for drug related offences during 2015. According to Table 1.11, 127 persons between ages 26 - 35 represented the largest age group for incarcerated drug offenders (sentenced and remanded) in 2015. The 18-25 year age group was the second largest group with a total of 114 persons.

Table 1.11 *Drug Admissions by Age Group (2015)*

Drugs Seized at BDOCS

In 2015, there were 21 drug incidents that occurred at BDOCS, where just over 2.0.lbs of marijuana were seized. In each incident, Bahamian male inmates were implicated. The largest amount of marijuana seized during one of these incidents totaled 1.lb.

DRUG TREATMENT DATA

Sandilands Rehabilitation Center

The Sandilands Rehabilitation Center (SRC) within the Ministry of Health is the national treatment facility for drug abusers in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The SRC is comprised of two sections that address drug abuse namely the Detoxification Unit and the Lignum Vitae Unit (LVU). In 2015, there were a total of 204 patients admitted to the Detox Unit for treatment. All of these patients were Bahamians and consisted mostly of males (165) and females (39). Approximately 60% of the clients were unemployed while 23% were employed, 15% were self employed and about 2% were retired. The average age for admission was 48 years. The youngest patient was 17 years old and the oldest was 62 years. More than 50% of the clients belonged to the 36–59 age group. Most patients (41.67%) sought treatment for abusing two or more drugs (poly substance abuse). Alcohol abuse (36.7%), marijuana abuse, (13.73%) and cocaine abuse (7.8%) were the other leading categories.

Table 1.12 *Detox Admissions by Drug Type (2015)*

Patients completing a more comprehensive substance abuse program at the Lignum Vitae Unit totaled 68 during 2015. They included 61 Bahamian males and 7 females who commuted to the all-male facility daily. The youngest male patient was 19 years, and the oldest was 61 years. More than half of the patients were between the ages 36 – 59 years, with the overall average age of 40 years. Most patients sought treatment for alcohol abuse (50.82%), poly substance abuse (39.4%), marijuana abuse (6.56%) and cocaine abuse (3.2%).

Table 1.13 *LVU Admissions by Drug Type (2015)*

PREVALENCE OF DRUG USE

Bahamas Secondary School Drug Prevalence Survey

The Bahamas Secondary School Drug Prevalence Survey is a general population-based cross sectional survey designed to measure substance use among youths. The target population consists of male and female students in grades 8, 10 and 12; ranging in age from 10yrs to 17rs from public and private secondary schools throughout The Bahamas. This survey examines key indicators such as types of drugs used by young people, attitudes and beliefs about drugs, exposure to drugs; age of initial use and exposure to prevention education. To date a series of these surveys have been carried out by the National Anti-Drug Secretariat in an effort to better monitor licit and illicit drug use in this population. Surveys were carried out in 2002, 2008 and 2011 respectively. Plans are underway to conduct another study in the fall of 2016.

As illustrated in Table 1.14, key findings from the 2011 Survey, which is the most current data source, revealed that marijuana was the common illicit drug of choice among students. Survey results revealed that marijuana use increased as more students tried marijuana as well as more students continued to use marijuana. Slight increases in use were observed in all categories when compared to 2008 results. Students who had tried marijuana at least once in their lifetime

increased from 12.7% in 2008 to 13.7% in 2011. Those who used marijuana in the past year increased from 7.2% to 9.7% in 2011. Additionally, those that used marijuana in the 30 days preceding the survey increased from 3.4% to 5%.

Table 1.14 *Trends in Marijuana Use Among Secondary School Students*

Trends in Average Age of First Drug Use (Marijuana)

In 2011, the average age of first time use of marijuana was 13 years for both sexes. There was no significance difference in age of first time use of marijuana between the genders when 2011 results were compared with 2008 results. Experimentation and use of cocaine was less prevalent than marijuana. Students that tried cocaine in their lifetime accounted for 2.3%. Those that tried ecstasy in their lifetime accounted for 2%. These overall findings indicated that experimentation with drugs such as cocaine and ecstasy were less popular. Table 1.14 below indicates the findings of other drugs which include the findings relative to cocaine and ecstasy.

Table 1.14 *Prevalence of Other Drug Use by Gender*

Drug	Gender	Prevalence		
		<i>Lifetime</i>	<i>Last 12 Months</i>	<i>Last 30 Days</i>
Cocaine	Females	0.7	0.4	0.1
	Males	1.6	0.9	0.5
	Total	2.3	0.7	0.6
Tranquilizers	Females	3.7	2.6	1.7
	Males	3.8	2.0	0.8
	Total	7.5	4.6	2.5
Stimulants	Females	2.6	1.9	1.5
	Males	2.7	1.6	0.9
	Total	5.3	3.5	2.4
Ecstasy	Females	0.9		
	Males	1.1		
	Total	2.0		

Regional Drug Prevalence Trends Among School Students

In November 2015, while at the 58th Regular Session in Trujillo Peru, Dr. Ken Garfield-Douglas, Consultant and Epidemiologist, reported on the findings of a study entitled, "Comparative Analysis of Drug Use Among Secondary School Students in 13 Caribbean Countries." The study analyzed survey findings between 2010 and 2013 in country across the region. A key aspect of the analysis focused on the extent to which secondary students used illicit and other types of drugs. According to the study, marijuana was the drug of choice among students across the Caribbean. The average age of first time use of marijuana for both sexes ranged between 12 yrs and 14yrs.

The Bahamas observed lower prevalence rates in each category of illicit substances namely, marijuana, cocaine and ecstasy. Additionally, The Bahamas' lifetime prevalence rates of illicit drugs was among the lowest regionally compared to combined country totals. As you will note in Table 1.15, local marijuana prevalence rates were lower than the regional average.

Table 1.15 *Regional Marijuana Prevalence Trends Among School Students*

PILLAR 1

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

PILLAR 1: INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

Objective 1: To Strengthen the National Anti-Drug Secretariat (NADS) within the Ministry of National Security, placing it at a high governmental level and providing it with the necessary capabilities and competencies to coordinate national drug policies in its stages of formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

NADS is mandated as the principal national body charged with effecting coherence, collaboration and coordination in anti-drug efforts and for implementation of the Strategy, in particular through improvement in its facilities and technical capacity and increase in its staffing tables. NADS will maintain a comprehensive overview of drug control activities of Government Ministries/Agencies, NGOs and community organizations and others entities concerned with drug control. NADS will assist in the development of policies and program for the prevention of drug abuse, treatment and rehabilitation and supply reduction and related matters;

The Director of NADS is a senior government official and reports to the Minister of National Security through the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Security. NADS is positioned to have an overview of the broad range of national action to counter drug abuse and illicit trafficking, as well as cooperative action taken at the regional and international levels. The NADS may, in implementing its mandate, draw on the experience and expertise of a number of existing or soon to be established bodies, strengthened or created to improve the coherence and effectiveness of the country's drug control efforts. Particular emphasis has been placed on setting clear mandates, determining leadership roles, responsibilities, and accountability of these bodies, and expanding the range of partners participating in them.

NADS will continue to serve as The Bahamas' official point of contact for all international drug control bodies including the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Cooperation Programme between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on Drug Policies (COPOLAD). NADS will continue to represent The Bahamas at these regional, hemispheric and international drug control conferences and will invite local stakeholders where appropriate. In conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and relevant Governmental entities, NADS will assist in the implementation of obligations arising from the international drug control treaties, articulate Government policies in regional, hemispheric and international organizations, and participate in international standards setting exercises, including in the Caribbean Community, the Organization of American States, the Commonwealth and the United Nations;

Priority Actions

1. Strengthen the National Anti Drug Secretariat (NADS). This will involve the review of the staffing tables, facilities, equipment and funding available to the NADS to effectively play its role as the principal national body for building coherence and cooperation in drug control, and for coordination and implementation of the National Anti-Drug Strategy.
2. Funding for NADS will include a line item under the Ministry of National Security's Annual National Budget and supplemented by the Confiscated Assets Fund where appropriate.
3. NADS will also serve as a potential funding source through the CAF where stakeholders can seek funds to build their organization's capacity. In the allocation of regular and realistic grants, particular consideration will be given to those organizations to which Government Ministries/Agencies and the courts regularly refer persons with substance abuse and misuse problems. NGOs and community organizations applying for grants from the CAF will be required to provide detailed information on the feasibility, practicability, value added and

sustainability of the projects and programs they present for funding. Where grants are awarded, accountability will be key as organizations will be required to follow regulations, guidelines and procedures established by Government for these purposes.

4. Establish a Ministerial Committee on Drug Control (MCDC), which will serve as the Government's oversight of the Strategy. It will provide the political leadership required for the implementation of the Strategy's goals and objectives, and to approve its Annual Program of Action over the five-year period. The MCDC comprises Ministers having portfolio responsibilities pertinent to the control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances including, National Security, Health, Education, Youth, Social Development, and Finance.
5. Establishment of the National Drug Policy Advisory Committee (NDPAC) which will be an expert group comprised of not more than 12 specialists who serve as heads of critical local drug control areas including law enforcement, criminal justice, mental health, social work, financial services, statistics etc. Members are appointed in their personal capacity during the life of this Strategy. As an advisory body to the MCDC, the Committee will provide analysis and information on drug control, particularly in the priority areas identified in the Strategy. The Director of the NADS will be an ex-officio Chair of the NDPAC.
6. The Drug Situation Report will be completed on an annual basis, which will provide a comprehensive overview of all national anti-drug activities for the preceding calendar year. With the assistance of local anti-drug stakeholders, NADS will continue to prepare and publish statistical and other periodic reports, complete questionnaires and other instruments from regional and international organizations, develop culturally relevant anti-drug resources, including drug prevention materials, professional and other guidelines, anti-drug posters and other public information publications.
7. Ensure that all national drug policies and strategies are comprehensive and balanced, based on evidence that include cross cutting human rights perspectives, consistent with obligations of parties under international law with a focus on gender and emphasizing development with social inclusion. Such policies should address fundamental causes and consequences of the drug problem.

Objective 2: Strengthen the National Drugs Observatory (NDO) within NADS for the development of national drug information systems and fostering scientific research in this area.

The NDO within NADS is the central location for obtaining drug information and drug statistics in The Bahamas. The NDO serves as the principle research center for compiling and analyzing drug data in order to track trends in supply and demand activities for the generation of timely and accurate assessments of the drug situation and drug control efforts to inform local drug policy and drug related services. Moreover, the NDO is established to fulfill the country's reporting obligations on the progress of measures taken with regard to United Nations Conventions and the Organization of American States General Assembly Resolutions adopted by The Bahamas on drug control. The NDO provides reliable data and information to these bodies so that anti-drug strategies can be monitored and assessed locally, regionally and globally.

The data collection and monitoring reference framework used by the NDO follows the guidelines adopted from the Lisbon Consensus which identifies 13 areas of policy interests compliant with United Nations and the Organization of American States policies. These thirteen areas of focus include:

- a) Drug consumption among the general population
- b) Drug Consumption by young people
- c) High-risk drug consumption
- d) Service Utilization
- e) Drug-related morbidity
- f) Drug -related emergency room visits
- g) Psychiatric morbidity directly attributed to drug consumption
- h) Drug-related mortality
- i) Social exclusion and disadvantage
- j) Drug -related crime
- k) Economic cost of drug consumption.

Priority Actions

1. Strengthen the NDD by providing additional staff, accommodations and technological equipment, to permit it to effectively carry out its functions and maintain the standards recommended by regional, hemispheric and international drug control bodies.
2. Spearhead local empirical research related to drug use and abuse including prevalence and abuse surveys in special and vulnerable populations and the general population.
3. Collaborate with NADS/NDD and the University of The Bahamas and other academic institutions interested in undertaking research, including on drug control issues identified for further study. This will also include the facilitation of access of experts in public facilities such as The Bahamas Department of Correctional Services, to conduct research in drug matters.
4. Implement a National Drug Information System which is the core of any reference framework and includes representatives from the various institutions, ministries, non-governmental agencies, academic institutions and international bodies that are data providers. Additionally, this system encompasses the flow of information, detailing the work process and the communication channels outlined in the information map which describes the sources of information. Most importantly it establishes the responsibility of each stakeholder. The NDD will be responsible for continually updating the drug information system by identifying gaps in information and discovering new sources of data, reflecting current trends and other changes occurring in drug information network.

Objective 3: Promote the design, adoption and implementation of alternatives to incarceration for low-level drug-related offences, while taking into account national, constitutional, legal and administrative systems in accordance with relevant international instruments.

As stated in the drug overview, over 6,000 persons have been charged and prosecuted for drug related offences since 2010. On average, just over 1,000 incidents occurred with over 800 cases being brought before the courts. Between 2010 and 2015, 6,093 drug incidents occurred and a total of 5,004 cases were prosecuted. The ongoing moves to strengthen the Bahamian criminal justice system, including the Swift Justice Program headed by the Office of the Attorney General, will take into account the unique dynamics and needs required for the proper adjudication of drug related offences. Over the

next five years, the efficiency of the criminal justice system in countering illicit drug crime and criminality will be augmented to ensure that adequate resources are always provided to the Judiciary for its effective functioning.

The wide-ranging body of drug related laws is routinely reviewed and amended where necessary to ensure their relevance with emerging patterns in the dispensation of justice for drug offenders. Local laws also aim to effectively incorporate into domestic law the provisions of bilateral, regional and international treaties and agreement. A list of current drug related laws is contained in the Appendices of this Strategy. Innovative alternative sentencing practices will be employed to strengthen the criminal justice system's response to persons, particularly first-time non-violent juvenile offenders, charged with committing crimes because of their misuse of drugs and psychotropic substances. Community service and character building initiatives will continue to be among measures available to the court to reduce recidivism in drug offenders, particularly youths, and to contribute to achieving the Strategy's overall objective.

The Bahamas has been making progress in the establishment of a Drug Treatment Courts for The Bahamas. The Hemispheric Drug Strategy, approved by the OAS General Assembly in June 2010, states that drug dependency is a chronic, relapsing disease that must be dealt with as a core element of public health policy. The Strategy calls on member states to "explore the means of offering treatment, rehabilitation and recovery support services to drug dependent offenders as an alternative to criminal prosecution or imprisonment". As a result, Drug Treatment Courts (DTC) have been established in a number of member states as an alternative to incarceration.

In October, 2011, the OAS's Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), in conjunction with the Canadian government, sponsored a training workshop in Trinidad. This training program was designed to facilitate the establishment of DTCs in Trinidad and The Bahamas. A delegation of 9 professionals from various sectors of the legal, judicial, law enforcement and health professions in The Bahamas participated in the training session. In February 2012, there was a follow up workshop held in Toronto, Canada and a team of 6 professionals, including members from the first workshop participated.

The delegates subsequently recommended that a DTC should be established as a cogent step in the right direction in efforts to combat the prevalence of drug use and abuse in The Bahamas. Participants noted that the benefits of a DTC in The Bahamas far outweighed the burdens of the system. They noted that DTC operate to divert non-violent offenders with substance abuse problems from incarceration into supervised programmes with treatment and rigorous standards of supervision and monitoring. These diversion programs will assist with easing the overcrowding in the correctional system.

On May 7, 2013, after consideration of the views of the delegates, the Cabinet of The Bahamas authorized the establishment of a pilot DTC in The Bahamas. During the 1st Quarter of 2015, NADS convened several meetings with officials from appropriate agencies including the RBPF, Office of the Attorney General, and the Ministry of Health, to determine the eligibility requirements, rules and procedures of the DTC for The Bahamas. The first critical step was to draft a Drug Treatment Court Bill along with Regulations to be reviewed by local stakeholders. The draft was completed in the 3rd quarter of 2015 with the assistance NADS staffers, lawyers from the Law Reform and Revision Commission and the Legal Officer in the Ministry of National Security.

On Tuesday 1st December, 2015 a High Level Dialogue on Alternatives to Incarceration for Drug Related Offences Meeting coordinated and sponsored by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States was officially opened by Secretary General Luis Almagro. The opening ceremony was held in the Hall of the Americas OAS Headquarter located 17th and Constitution Ave. Washington, D.C. The Dialogue's participants consisted of chief justices, judges, and presiding officers of many courts from countries throughout the Caribbean, Canada and South America. Representing The Bahamas were Chief Justice, Sir Hartman Longley; Mr. Carl Smith, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Security; H.E. Elliston Rahming, Permanent Representative of The Bahamas to the OAS and the United Nations; Mr. David Ramsey, Supply Reduction Officer, and Ms. Krissy Hanna, Second Secretary/Alternate Representative of The Bahamas to the OAS. The Bahamas is now in the critical stages of the establishment process.

While jurisprudence for drug addicts will be therapeutic in nature, responses for drug traffickers will remain punitive. With the increase in the magistrates sentencing powers, persons convicted of drug trafficking offences can be sentenced to the maximum prison terms. Other measures introduced will reduce the prospects of jury tampering and witness intimidation, to address challenges to jury trials in major drug trafficking and extradition matters.

Priority Actions

1. Establish a Drug Treatment Court for The Bahamas as an alternative to incarceration for low-level drug related offences. This court will offer treatment, rehabilitation and recovery support services to drug dependent offenders as an alternative to criminal prosecution or imprisonment. All courtroom players will be properly trained and will specialize in the area of drug related matters and will be assigned to prosecute drug and other related cases.
2. Regularly review, amend, and enact illegal drug and related legislation to effectively address new and emerging challenges in drug control, and to keep in step with international obligations.
3. Strict enforcement by the criminal justice system and all security agencies of anti-drug and related laws, including those on the sale of drugs and alcohol to children and young people; dealing drugs in and around schools; gun possession; border protection; and the import and export of pharmaceuticals/chemicals, including precursor chemicals, in accordance with relevant provisions of the international drug control treaties.
4. Promote proportionate sentencing, ensuring that it addresses the seriousness of drug trafficking offences and safeguarding legal proceedings.
5. Promote continuous training and cross-training in the criminal justice system to allow greater cohesion in criminal justice system responses to drugs and crime.
6. Targeted advocacy for the vigorous enforcement of laws relating to the sale of alcohol and cigarettes to under aged persons, particularly in and around school premises.

PILLAR 2

DEMAND REDUCTION

PILLAR 2: DEMAND REDUCTION

Objective 1: Establish demand reduction policies with a public health focus that are evidence-based, multidisciplinary and respectful of human rights considering the guidelines and recommendations of specialized international organizations.

In order to guide sound demand reduction policies and programs, there is a need for more drug prevalence surveys. The ground work for a national household survey is underway with support from the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD). The completion of this study will be critical in drafting new drug policies in the area of demand. Findings from The Bahamas Secondary School Drug Prevalence Survey, however, found that The Bahamas observed lower prevalence rates in each category of illicit substances namely, marijuana, cocaine and ecstasy. Additionally, The Bahamas' lifetime prevalence rates of illicit drugs was among the lowest regionally compared to combined country totals. Nonetheless, this Strategy will focus on ensuring that this vulnerable population is not forgotten.

The broad demand reduction objectives encompasses action to prevent the first use of drugs, especially by children and youths, to prevent the transition from first use to chronic use, to support the effort of people that abuse drugs to stop by providing appropriate treatment and rehabilitation and to support individuals and families at risk. Additionally it includes the periodic assessment of the prevalence of drug abuse, especially for policy-making and implementation purposes, engagement with the media to raise public awareness about the dangers of drug abuse, and invest in training, research and other activities that support the course of action set out in the Strategy.

The Bahamas National Drug Council (BNDC) was established in 1985 and its principal mandate has been advocacy for drug demand reduction. This task in-cooperates the promotion of healthy drug free lifestyles and the prevention of drug use in schools, workplaces and the community. The BNDC will remain the lead agency for demand reduction, where information will flow between NADS and the BNDC. The scope of demand reduction initiatives will be expanded through collaboration with, and renewed support for, NGOs and community-based organizations. Particular emphasis will continue to be placed on partnerships with those organizations that have customarily worked in the area of demand reduction, especially those offering residential and transitional facilities to persons with drug dependence.

Priority Actions

1. Strengthen an integrated system of universal, selected and targeted prevention program on drug use, giving priority to vulnerable and at-risk population, and incorporating human rights, gender, age and multicultural approach.
2. Establish a structured, collaborative drug prevention network comprising Government entities, NGOs and community organizations for a comprehensive response to demand reduction efforts centered on promoting healthy drug-free lifestyles, especially among young people. Measures for prevention of drug abuse, to be focused on prevention of first use, will be linked to broader issues of education, welfare and the protection of youth, especially girls, from all forms of exploitation.
3. A renewed outreach to the private sector to partner with Government and the community by sponsoring demand reduction and prevention projects, particularly those crafted and to be implemented by young people.
4. Launch, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and relevant academic institutions a Tertiary Institutions Drug Prevention Initiative, to provide continued push to college students not to misuse drugs, to seek help for drug problems before they become worse, and for advancing demand reduction projects in tertiary institutions.
5. Continue to support the academic and technical education and training required to build professionals with specialist qualifications, knowledge and skills required to deal with the broad range of drug abuse issues, particularly those involving children and young people.
6. Take full advantage of training opportunities and other capacity building initiatives offered bilaterally and by regional, hemispheric and international organizations, with a view to improving the country's initiatives to reduce the illicit demand for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
7. Facilitate the training of NGO professionals, by supporting their participation, as appropriate, in training and capacity building initiatives offered to The Bahamas bilaterally, regionally and internationally.

Objective 2: Strengthen the relationship between NADS, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Youth Sports & Culture, the University of The Bahamas, independent schools, youth organizations and the media with the goal of raising awareness of the impact of drugs by maximizing the access that these institutions has to a key populations in the drug problem.

The Government understands that it has a clear obligation to provide a safe learning environment for all students free from the harmful impact of drugs. A key component to this responsibility is to educate school aged children on the dangers of drug use and abuse. Seeing that educators have the most access to children during their educational years, schools have become a key partner and space to bring the message of a drug free life to students. It costs less to prevent a young person from taking drugs in the first place than it would to treat and rehabilitate that person later as drug addict.

Under this Strategy, the drug education curriculum in schools will be strengthened and become an integral part of the school's core curriculum. Appropriate education and training will be provided for teachers which will include sensitization to the warning signs of drug abuse. New and updated culturally relevant teaching and classroom materials will be produced for use in drug education classes. Ongoing programs will be reviewed periodically, to ensure that the appropriate anti-drug messages are being sent and received by the intended target audience.

The emphasis on education for the prevention of drug abuse will be on getting the message to children and their parents about the dangers of drug misuse, especially at an early age. It will also be on strengthening the resolve of young people to

resist peer pressure, a significant contributing factor to drug misuse, and on discouraging them from trafficking drugs into and around their schools. In that regard, schools will be encouraged to develop an “adolescent friendly facility” where students with drug and other problems can discuss their issues with school administrators in confidence.

Social media has changed the entire broadcasting industry and the speed at which information can be shared. Social media will be an extremely useful tool in this new Strategy as it will be used to raise the awareness of drug use and abuse to target populations. Nonetheless, ties with traditional forms of media, including public service announcements (PSAs), print media and news programs, will be strengthened to ensure that appropriate anti-drug messages reach the wider community over the life of the Strategy.

Social programs, community engagement, youth program in areas including sports, culture, skills training and community services will be strategically aligned with a unified goal of promoting healthy drug-free lifestyles. Government’s investment in policy and programmatic areas affecting youth, including youth employment and educational initiatives, will be increased to lessen the pressures and other problems that might lead them to misuse drugs and to engage in related anti-social behavior.

Priority Actions

1. Ensure that all guidance counselors, family life educators and school based police officers are fully trained in the School Based Prevention Intervention Program of the International Centre for Credentialing and Education of Addiction Professionals (ICCE) as a part of the Universal Prevention Curriculum for Substance Use Series.
2. Expand the National Drug Free Schools Day, which is a National recognized day observed on the 3rd Monday of October each year. On this day, students, parents, and educators across The Bahamas set aside time to raise awareness and reflect on the impact of drug use and abuse.
3. Update and fully integrate the drug component in the Ministry of Education’s Health and Family Life Curriculum into the overall public school curriculum. This will also include periodic review of the curriculum to determine its effectiveness in promoting healthy drug-free lifestyles.
4. Produce culturally relevant anti-drug teaching and study materials for use by teachers, students and by Parent-Teacher Associations in special meetings convened specifically for dialogue on children, youth and the drug problem.
5. Expand NADS’ relationships with youth organizations including sporting clubs, brigades, marching bands and other youth associations to create more spaces for activities that are geared toward reducing the demand for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
6. Increase the involvement of the law enforcement officials, including the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Royal Bahamas Defence Force, and the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services in youth anti-drug initiatives, including those seeking to reach out of young people in the schools. This will also involve the expansion of the Police Cadets Corps and Defence Force Rangers Program.
7. Expand the commemorative effort of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. NADS will continue to spearhead the multi-sectoral planning committee which will organize a series of activities geared toward raising awareness of the scope of the drug problem.

8. Strengthen the relationship between the Bahamas Information Services (BIS) and NADS, who together will ensure that local media organizations are involved in the production and promotion of national anti-drug campaigns and documentaries. The theme over the next five years will be *'I'm loving me...drug free'*.
9. Increase the use of social media platforms, including *facebook, whatsapp, youtube, instagram* and *twitter*, to share drug related information to target populations.
10. Launch a NADS website that will serve as a hub for information sharing and gathering for all anti-drug activities. This website will also contain links to websites of all local drug stakeholders.
11. Build referral capacities at the Department of Social Services which will identify more persons who may be impacted by drug use and abuse. This will involve closer examinations of housing, child protection, family services, and rehabilitation services.
12. Update protocols to be used by Government Ministries and Agencies in referring persons to Government, NGOs and community facilities providing support for youth at risk and for drug dependent persons.
13. Carry out processes and results-based evaluations of demand reduction programs.

Objective 3: Establish a national treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration system for people with problematic drug use, including a human rights and gender-based approach, taking into account internationally accepted quality standards.

The number of persons seeking treatment for drug dependence and related conditions, together with court mandated and monitored treatment for drug offenders, translates into significant demands on the single Government drug treatment and rehabilitation facility in an archipelagic state. Further, persons recovering from drug dependence generally return to the same high risk environment from which they came.

The Sandilands Rehabilitation Center (SRC) provides psychiatric, geriatric and substance abuse services. It is The Bahamas' national drug treatment facility and is located in New Providence on Fox Hill Road. SRC has a staff complement of 850 and is comprised primarily of two hospitals, the Geriatric Hospital which cares for the elderly and the Sandilands Hospital which cares for children, adolescents and adult clients. SRC has two substance abuse units, namely Detoxification (Detox) and Lignum Vitae Unit.

The Detox Unit was established in April, 1992 as a project of the community drive "Hands Across The Bahamas", which was spear headed by the Rotary Club of the Bahamas. It was established in response to an identified need for an introductory phase to the in-patient, intensive drug rehabilitation programme at the Sandilands Rehabilitation Center. The Detox Unit is a 26 bed unit with accommodations for 9 female patients and 17 male patients that are recovering from alcohol, marijuana, prescription/street drug abuse, and often a combination of these drugs. The therapeutic programme is provided by a multi-disciplinary team of professional caregivers that directs and administers constant and continuous care to patients. This multi-disciplinary team consist of persons in the Medical, Nursing, Psychology, Social Services, Occupational and Recreational Services. Support services are also provided by volunteers from Alcoholics Anonymous and various religious groups. Over the course of this Strategy, the Government will continue to building capacities of this and other treatment facilities.

Priority Actions

1. Solidify the minimum standards of treatment facilities in The Bahamas. This will provide general standards of care for persons that misuse drugs, for uniformity in the services offered at all local treatment facilities where patients with drug dependence are referred. The objective is to ensure that the highest standard of care is uniformly offered and maintained by all.
2. Extend treatment and rehabilitative care services to Grand Bahama and the Family Islands. This will involve implementing the out-patient program at the Rand Memorial Hospital and the development of similar programs in Family Islands for patients with problems of drug and substance abuse. This will therefore meet the challenge of after-care and follow-up of persons recovering from substance abuse through improved accessibility to treatment and rehabilitation follow-up facilities.
3. Strengthen engagement with national organizations concerned with the status of women to enhance the SRC/LVU's outreach treatment and rehabilitation of women with drug and substance abuse challenges.
4. Strengthen measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health and social consequences of drug abuse. Promoting the technical guide for countries to set targets for universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care for injecting drug users, issued by the World Health Organization, the United Nation's Office on Drugs and Crime and the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS.
5. Foster ongoing training and certification of human resources that provide prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration services. This will involve implementing competency-based training mechanisms, in collaboration with the University of The Bahamas and other academic institution, and those specializing in the area.

Objective 4: The establishment of treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration programs for persons incarcerated at the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services (BDOCS) with problematic drug use.

According to the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services Annual Report for 2015, drug offenders represented 21 % (337) of the total daily average inmate population 1,549 for 2015. While drug offenders do not make up the majority of inmates, many of them indicated that drug abuse influenced the commission of their crime and subsequent deviant behavior. The Government has therefore focused on BDOCS as a pivotal setting for a rigorous drug treatment and rehabilitation program to curb demand and treat and rehabilitate the predominantly male population of young drug abusers and prepare them for re-integration into the communities.

Priority Actions

1. Strengthen the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services Drug Challenge Program which commenced in May 2012. The purpose for this program is to provide a therapeutic and change oriented environment for sentenced inmates dealing with drug dependence. Inmates are selected based on recommendation of the Classification Board which is responsible for sentence planning.
2. Establish a 100 bed Drug Treatment Facility at BDOCS for inmate with special needs including those required treatment for drug use and abuse. This facility will separate from the other inmate population with a view to

assist in the treatment and rehabilitation of such persons, and appropriate training for Correctional officers. Plans have already been drawn and a location on the BDCOS campus has already been identified.

3. Continue routine drug testing upon admission to BDCOS to identify inmates who may be abusing narcotic drugs and/or psychotropic substances. Inmates identified for drug treatment and rehabilitation will also be subject to random drug testing until their release.
4. The Department of Social Services and concerned NGOs and community organizations will be engaged in partnerships with BDCOS assist former drug abusers in probation and parole exercises, and where possible, to offer or arrange half-way house accommodation and other services for them, with a view to reducing recidivism both of drug abuse and return to BDCOS.
5. Expand partnerships among relevant Ministries/Agencies of Government, NGOs and community organizations in the pre-release period to provide support for former inmates recovering from drug abuse upon their release, in areas including accommodation, employment and family support.

Objective 5: Strengthen the relationship between NADS and Community Based Organizations & Non-Governmental Organizations with the goal of implementing and managing drug demand reduction programs, focused primarily on treatment and rehabilitation of at-risk youth.

CBOs offer years of grassroots experience in prevention, education, social integration, treatment, and harm reduction to the most affected people and communities who suffer from drug dependency despite a lack of funding. CBOs recognize that prevention is an effective, balanced, humane, and cost effective drug policy. Particularly, policy makers are better informed with data collection, market research analysis, joint program service implementation and delivery, and funding allocations.

CBO treatment options for drug dependence may include, but not be limited to psychosocial therapies, abstinence-based therapies, and behavior therapies. Such interventions are cornerstone of drug policy. Moreover, CBOs have encouraged an interactive global dialogue on key priorities for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are expected to be achieved by 2030, while underscoring shared responsibilities on the ground, and highlighting best practice and key challenges working in the field.

A number of NGOs and community organizations, including faith-based organizations, have been involved in setting up and managing demand reduction program which catered to predominately young persons. The range of essential residential, counseling, job training, employment and other services NGOs and community organizations provide help to make demand reduction initiatives sustainable. However, the capacity of these organizations, particularly the therapeutic and residential communities, is greatly surpassed by the need for their services.

There is a need to strengthen coherence and collaboration between Government entities and NGOs and community organizations. This will create a space where these stakeholders can work together to efficiently implement national demand reduction priorities. The more coherent framework being pursued will ensure that as important implementing agents for the Strategy, NGOs and community organizations take ownership of where they fit in the overall implementation.

Priority Actions

1. Expand support and incentives, including regular and dependable financial support, to NGOs and community organizations to improve and expand their treatment and rehabilitation facilities and program as necessary, in accordance with established guidelines
2. Provide assistance in the building of professional and expert capacity in NGO and community based organizations by incorporating them, as appropriate, in education and training exercises offered by bilateral, regional and other partners and organizations, and in regional and international demand reduction meetings
3. Create the space for NGOs and community based organizations to work towards the development of a 'women's agenda' that takes into account the needs and perspectives of women on the demand reduction, treatment and rehabilitation.

Objective 6: Strengthen the relationship between NADS and Civil Society with the goal of implementing and managing drug demand reduction programs, focused primarily on treatment and rehabilitation and at-risk youth.

One of the main demand reduction objectives is to give greater priority to people who are not yet dependent on drugs (primary prevention). As such, it is a community intervention strategy integrated in a wider social and health policy framework which attempts to reduce the adverse consequences of drug use (harm reduction). There are a number of local Civil Society Organizations dealing with issues related to drug control – which include Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), community based organizations (CBOs), social movements, think tanks, media outlets, faith-based charities, neighborhood groups, academics, including professional groups that have very good experience in the highly specialized field of drugs, while other mentoring systems are involved in different activities that could impact the coordination of plans with other sectors to address the national drug situation.

Working on the ground, Civil Society Organizations, are a vital front line component of a multi-sectoral approach to a national drug control strategy. CSOs are a key resource for governments in identifying drug use and misuse target populations at an early stage and provide evidence-based interventions for people suffering from drug dependence and management associated with harm, such as risks factors related to HIV, hepatitis, co-occurring disorders, tuberculosis, and drug overdose.

Over the years, social costs of drug misuse and dependency has been overwhelming, as well as a major concern for government, not just around drugs, but also many other risky behaviors including, tobacco, alcohol, unsafe sex, poor street and night club environments, and unhealthy eating. In fact, CSO effective evidence-based interventions for different populations affected by drug use, have shown to be effective at improving healthy lifestyles, enhancing social insertions, and reducing the social costs of drugs. The ongoing dialogue and partnership between CSOs with local and central authorities in the drug demand and harm reduction field has extended greater cooperation of stakeholders at all levels within the National Anti-Drug Strategies. In this way, CSOs are integrated into a wider supportive services network dealing with drugs genuinely as a public health and social issue.

Priority Actions

1. Work with Civil Society to improve public health centered, community protection, prevention, harm reduction, and evidence-based treatment approaches to drug issues, including sustainability of families and communities. This will be done free from political interference or coercion within medium-to- low income settings in distinct

populations, including youth with measurable objectives designed in accordance to elaborate, implement, and monitor drug use.

2. Work with Civil Society to draft policies and programs within a comprehensive holistic framework. Since CSOs promote a culture of cooperation and can provide a safety net at all stages of continuum of care for substance use disorders, they will be key in advocating for alternative measures including diversions to treatment and rehabilitation programs for drug users instead of incarceration.
3. Strengthen the institutional capacity of CSOs to reduce the prevalence of drug use and misuse among new users, especially among young people have expanded through the PROCCER regional training and the Colombo Plan's International Centre for Credentialing and Education of Addiction Professionals (ICCE) Training Series.

1.

PILLAR 3

SUPPLY REDUCTION

PILLAR 3: SUPPLY REDUCTION

Objective 1. Design, implementation and strengthen comprehensive and balanced policies and programs, aimed at preventing and decreasing the illicit supply of drugs, in accordance to the territorial realities of The Bahamas and respecting human rights.

As previously stated, The Bahamas is not a drug producing country, but remains a transit point for illegal drugs bound for the North America and other international markets. The country's proximity to the coast of Florida combined with its location on Caribbean transshipment routes makes it a natural conduit for illicit drug trafficking. The majority of the 700 islands and cays which makes up the Commonwealth of The Bahamas are uninhabited and provide a near-ideal conditions for trafficking. Smugglers readily blend in among numerous pleasure craft traveling throughout The Bahamas archipelago, which covers nearly 100,000 square nautical miles. Trafficking also occurs through commercial and private aircrafts. The production, trafficking, use and abuse of illicit narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and associated activities such as murder, firearms trafficking, armed robbery and money laundering present a challenge to the Government of The Bahamas in maintaining law and order for its citizens and visitors alike.

This Strategy seeks to strengthen agencies with responsibility for detecting, eradicating or reducing the supply of drugs. It is an essential component of a well-balanced strategic approach to drug control. Demand reduction cannot be successful without limiting drug availability. When illegal drugs are readily available, the likelihood increases that they will be abused.

To advance the Government's position there are a number of agencies mandated with the responsibility of suppressing the flow of illegal drugs in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. These include the Royal Bahamas Police Force, the Royal Bahamas Defence Force and the Bahamas Customs Department. All of which in recent times have had significant improvements in infrastructure, human resource development and technical resources. It is vital that these organizations are equipped to carry out their mandate regarding supply reduction. They must also build their capacity in providing a defence to the importation or trafficking of illegal drugs and psychotropic substances. This is achievable through close cooperation and inter-agency coordination of efforts and assets.

Priority Actions

1. Improve inter-agency cooperation to provide a comprehensive response to the illicit production of drugs, in the framework of the responsibilities and mandates of each agency, including collaboration among the public and private sectors and international community.
2. Develop and implement mechanism to collect and analyze information for the development of policies and actions aimed at decreasing the illicit supply of drugs.
3. Promote illicit supply reduction measures that take into account the licit traditional uses, whenever there is empirical evidence of such uses as well as environmental protection.
4. Develop, as appropriate and based on evidence, the effects caused by small –scale drug trafficking on public health, the economy, social cohesion and citizen security.

Objective 2. To Reduce the trafficking of illicit drugs throughout the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

The Bahamas is an active participant in the “Operation Bahamas and Turks and Caicos” (OPBAT), a multi-agency international drug interdiction cooperative effort established in 1982. OPBAT is the largest and oldest cooperative effort by any government involved in drug enforcement. Under the OPBAT agreement, U.S. law enforcement agencies integrate with the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF) to gather intelligence, conduct investigations, and execute interdictions. Within in the last five years, OPBAT operations seized nearly 4,000lbs of cocaine and 5,000lbs of marijuana that were moving through our borders destined for North America.

In November of 2014, the U.S. Interdiction Coordinator (USIC) and The Interdiction Committee (TIC) traveled to New Providence to present the 2013 USIC Award in the Joint Operations category to Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos. OPBAT is the first-ever recipient of the prestigious award in this category. The annual USIC awards recognize significant contributions to the continuing effort to counter the increasing international and asymmetric threat posed by the trafficking of narcotics and other illicit substances. This Strategy will strengthen all of the mechanisms of supply reduction over the next 5-years.

Priority Actions

1. Improve the coordination and cooperation of national law enforcement agencies involved in drug interdiction. This will include strengthening our role in OPBAT.
2. Continue the decentralization and upgrading of law enforcement tools and initiatives throughout the archipelago, particularly those of the Royal Bahamas Defence Force, to better counter the trans-border trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, often linked to illegal migration flows and the illegal arms trade.
3. Confront and reduce drug related crime and criminality and enhancing public safety, by the further the acquisition of assets for the security forces and other agencies, including modern equipment and technology for surveillance, information systems, and patrol crafts.
4. To enhance the security of the Container Port in Grand Bahama and ports throughout the country, through the purchase and upgrading, as necessary, of equipment for the detection of drugs and other contraband in cargo shipments.

Objective 3. Design and implement plans and/or programs to mitigate and reduce the impact of illicit crops and drug production on the environment, with the incorporation and participation of local communities, in accordance with the national policies including the establishments of alternative development programs for those at risk of becoming cultivators.

The Bahamas is cognizant of the fact that socio-economic factors including poverty, marginalization and lack of sustainable livelihoods may drive persons to engage in the production, and trafficking of illicit drugs. Hence, alternative development should be included our national anti-drug strategy. Apart from the discovery of several relatively small marijuana fields on parcels of land, The Bahamas has not been a producing state.

Small island developing states, particularly archipelagic states such as The Bahamas are especially challenged by the need to provide basic and appropriate infrastructure to meet education, health, transportation and other needs that will attract its citizenry to embrace the opportunities that exist for engagement in legitimate sustainable enterprises such as sports fishing, boutique resorts operations, commercial fishing. The resources that are used to ward off and intercept those engaged in criminal enterprises could be better used to assist with the development of entrepreneurs via means such as providing loans for purchase of boats, establishing marine processing plants, access to export markets.

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the three dimensions of sustainable development include economic, social and environmental. Environmental stability includes the promotion of sustainable food production systems and robust agricultural practices. Promoting a culture of sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable populations and sharing of resources is a useful tool in alternative development. There are a number of initiatives outlined in this Strategy that are aimed at providing positive options for person who are most at risk of becoming involved in drug trafficking.

Priority Actions

1. Work in tandem with The Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI) where professional and technical qualifications are provided which are necessary to improve various branches of agriculture and marine resources and to provide strong academic training and extensive hands-on orientation in crop and livestock production farm management, environment, environment conservation, agri-business and management of marine resources.
2. Work closely with the \$20 million Citizen Security and Justice Program, where one of the key objectives includes the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. There is a labor component within this project, which promotes skill building and job opportunities for person most at risk of becoming involved in drug cultivation and trafficking.
3. Strengthen interagency cooperation to provide a comprehensive response to the illicit production of drugs, in the framework of the responsibilities and mandates of each agency, including collaboration among the public and private sectors and the international community.

Objective 4: The establishment of supply programs for persons increased at the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services (BDOCS).

Illicit drugs have impacted security measures at the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services. These drugs and other contraband such as cell phones enter the facility through various methods. The Drug Enforcement Unit's statistics identifies marijuana as the common drug seized at BDOCS and exposes opportunities to improve security challenges. Comprehensive and strict policies must be strengthened and enforced through legal framework in order to dissuade the roles of both staffers and inmates in prison drug network.

This new Strategy highlights standards set out for demand and supply reduction in the correctional setting, which places drug reduction methods at BDOCS at a high priority. This will ensure that the necessary components exist to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate the supply reduction initiatives among residents at the facility.

Priority Actions

1. Strengthen drug supply reduction at BDOCS through comprehensive policies focused on preventing and detecting the flow of illicit drugs into the correctional facility. Strengthening measures in this regard will assist in reducing and disabling any person involved in illegal drug trafficking networks and thereby restricting inmate accessibility to drug contraband.
2. Strengthen control measures to address and dismantle the cultivation of illicit drugs such as marijuana in agricultural spaces at the correctional facility. Staff will receive relevant training in identification of illicit plant and chemical based drugs. Agricultural spaces should be screened on regulatory bases by trained staff to lessen opportunities for offenders assigned to farming projects to covertly use those spaces for marijuana cultivation.
3. Develop best correctional practices from international partners for the advancement of the correctional department. International partnerships with the United States and Canada have been beneficial to correctional staff. These multilateral relationships have provided training in security threat groups and contraband detection.
4. Strengthening existing controls and imposing new controls as necessary to prevent the smuggling of narcotic drugs & psychotropic substances into BDOCS. This will include ensuring baggage scanners and other screening technology are fully operational at all times as well as the full completion of all perimeter walls. Funding will be made available for the proper allocation of security resources for drug reduction program.
5. Fully utilize the BDOCS K-9 Unit which recently completed an extensive 5-month training course. The new Correctional Services Act (2014), which authorized Principal Corrections Officers (PCO's) to specially search officers suspected of trafficking drugs & cell phones, will be fully enforced.
6. Appropriate training in intelligence gathering, detection methods, and procedures for officers of the Internal Affairs Unit who have been trained in drug detection and investigation both internationally and locally.
7. Strengthen cooperation and collaboration between BDOCS' Internal Affairs & Security Intelligence Units and the Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU) to conduct drug investigations within the correctional facility.

PILLAR 4

CONTROL MEASURES

PILLAR 4: CONTROL MEASURES

Objective 1: Adopt and/or strengthen control measures to prevent diversion towards illicit activities of pharmaceutical products containing precursors substances or those containing narcotic drugs and/or psychotropic substances, ensuring the adequate availability and access solely for medical and scientific purposes.

The Bahamas National Drug Agency (BNDA) was formed in 1994, under the Ministry of Health, in order to streamline purchasing of medicines for public sector health facilities. After the formation of the Public Hospitals Authority (PHA), the BNDA resumed its functioning under the administrative oversight of the PHA as a 'shared service' unit. This means that while the PHA has responsibility for the BNDA, the Agency provides services for all public sector pharmacies.

Under the PHA, the scope of the BNDA's functions also expanded to include:

1. Supply management of pharmaceuticals & associated supplies, inclusive of tendering exercises;
2. Development of policy and processes related to pharmacy management & pharmaceutical care;
3. Collaboration with institutional Pharmacy & Therapeutic committees;
4. Provision of training in various areas of pharmacy practice & supply management;
5. Processing of national (public & private) narcotic medication records; and
6. Provision of technical advice to the PHA relating to pharmacy matters.

The staff of twenty-four (24) professionals, ranging from administrators, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, supply officers and support personnel. It works directly with all PHA and public health pharmacies, and has indirect interaction

with various government health programs, including but not limited to HIV/AIDS unit, and the Disease Surveillance unit. It also provides technical assistance to the Customs Department and the Drug Enforcement Unit of the Royal Bahamas Police Force when necessary. Under this new Strategy, the B+BNDA will be strengthened.

Priority Actions

1. Seek an amendment to the Dangerous Drug Act Chapter 228 requiring all facilities that administer or dispense any controlled substances to produce reports on utilization.
2. Strengthen national measures to address the challenge of new psychoactive substances and the threat of amphetamine stimulants.
3. Implement measures to control pharmaceutical products that contain precursor substances, narcotics or psychoactive substances, in order to prevent their diversion to non-medical purposes.
4. Update existing regulations and control measures to prevent diversion of pharmaceutical product containing narcotic drugs and/or psychotropic substances.

Objective 2: Establish, update and strengthen, as appropriate, the legislative and institutional frameworks to counter money laundering derived from drug trafficking.

As a country with a long-established financial service industry, The Bahamas determination to safeguard its banks and other financial institutions from money laundering is reflected in the action to be taken under the Strategy. This is particularly so in the area of drug control, where the Government's objective is to disrupt trafficking networks by preventing them from using the banking and financial system to move money across national borders, and to conceal the proceeds of their crimes.

The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) was formed in December, 2000 under the Financial Intelligence Unit Act, 2000. This Act outlines the functions and powers of the agency. The FIU is the national centre responsible for receiving, analyzing, obtaining, and disseminating information which relates to the proceeds of crime offences under the Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Terrorism Acts of the Bahamas. The FIU is also the body responsible for co-operation between FIU's in other countries. In June 2001, the FIU became the 54th member of Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units.

Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) are one of the main weapons in the fight against money laundering and other financial crimes that the Royal Bahamas Police Force uses to initiate money laundering investigations. During 2015, the FIU received 205 STRs from financial institutions in The Bahamas, inclusive of company service providers, credit unions, domestic banks, offshore banks, attorney-at-law, trust companies, stock brokers, fund managers and real estate agents for analysis. Under this new Strategy, the FIU will be strengthened to provide increased assistance to associated agencies in the ongoing fight against money laundering and terrorist financing.

Priority Actions

1. Establish and/or strengthen agencies for the administration and disposition of seized and/or forfeited assets in cases of drug trafficking, money laundering and other related crimes.

2. Money laundering initiatives will continue to be underpinned by a strong and effective system that incorporates international regulatory standards, rigorous enforcement of legislation and regulations in respect of disclosure, surveillance, and mutual legal assistance. A critical partnership between Government and the financial services sector, and cooperation with security regulators at the international level will be strengthened.
3. Review and update regulatory and supervisory laws and practices on money laundering to protect the integrity and security of the financial services industry, to rigorously enforce disclosure requirements and other requirements, and to keep in step with international regulatory standards.

Objective 3: Strengthen agencies for the administration and disposition of seized and forfeited assets as proceeds of crime in cases of drug trafficking.

Forfeiture of the proceeds of drug crimes is a powerful weapon that is being used aggressively by the criminal justice system to deprive convicted drug traffickers of the profits of their illegal enterprises, and disrupting their affluent lifestyles. Confiscation strikes a blow against major drug traffickers in particular, who build their fortunes on human misery, and at the expense of law and order and the safety and security of citizens, residents and visitors alike.

An important incentive to pursue confiscation of the proceeds of drug crime is that it reduces the capacity of traffickers to fund their illegal operations, and to conduct other criminal activities. Importantly, the proceeds of confiscated properties, assets and monies of convicted drug traffickers, amounting in the millions of dollars, are deposited to the Confiscated Assets Fund (CAF), and are used to pay for the acquisition of major assets for the security forces, and other drug control initiatives. Under the Strategy, the approach to the identification, tracing, freezing and forfeiture of the assets of convicted drug traffickers will include the following priority actions.

Priority Actions

1. Establish specialized agencies and appropriate mechanisms for the transparent administration of seized and forfeited assets, in accordance with international standards.
2. Build on ongoing national initiatives and those being taken in collaboration with other countries to deprive drug traffickers of assets they have acquired using profits from their illegal enterprises.
3. Focus on the strict enforcement and periodic updating of laws and regulations governing forfeiture, to ensure their effectiveness. This will include strengthening multilateral cooperation and coordination mechanisms in the area of forfeiture and management of assets derived from drug trafficking and related crimes.
4. Utilize the resources of the CAF to support a broader range of effective anti-drug policies and programs, including those formulated to promote social cohesion and social development.
5. Develop and implement specialized training programs on the administration and disposition of seized and forfeited assets.

PILLAR 5

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

PILLAR 5: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Objective 1: Promote and strengthen regional, hemispheric and international cooperation and coordination mechanisms to foster technical assistance, improve exchange of information and experiences, and share best practices lessons learned on drug policies and related crimes.

The drug problem is an issue that impacts most countries in the world, whether as source, transit or consumer nation. Despite significant regional and international efforts to disrupt the transit and supply of illicit drugs and reduce demand, the illegal drug trade remains a hugely profitable enterprise for organized criminals. Internationally, there is growing concern about current drug policies. A number of countries have questioned the wisdom of attempting to deal with drug problems primarily by prohibition, criminalization and penalization of drug users; and are calling for a new focus on actions to reduce the harm caused to the victims of drug related crimes; drug users and others. Studies have found support for the position that many of the traditional actions taken by the international community are not yielding the desired results. As a result, progressive nations have now shifted to a public health approach in dealing with the world drug problem.

During the course of this Strategy, The Bahamas will be a part of this shift and will continue to be a committed and supportive partner in addressing the world drug problem through regional, hemispheric and international cooperative

initiatives. OPBAT, the *Shiprider* arrangement and the targeted donations of assets and equipment, notably under Operation Enduring Friendship, are just a few international programs that have positively impacted The Bahamas' anti-drug efforts.

The active participation of Bahamas law enforcement agencies in the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) process has been taken into account in the courses of action in this new Strategy. Since the beginning of the CBSI process in 2009, relevant agencies have contributed to the identification of common regional security objectives in drug control, and to decisive action to implement these objectives. Over the course of this Strategy, Bahamas law enforcement officers will continue to actively work in the CBSI partnership to intensify action against illicit drug trafficking networks operating in the region.

Opportunities for bilateral and regional drug law enforcement cooperation presented by participation in the CARICOM security regime and other regional, hemispheric and international bodies, including Inter-American Drug Control Commission (CICAD), the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the Heads of Narcotics Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) and INTERPOL, will also be strengthened throughout the course of this Strategy. To ensure coherence between action at the national level and obligations at the regional and international levels, the close collaboration between the Ministry of National Security's NADS and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, essential to achieving drug control objectives, will be enhanced through a special liaison arrangement.

Priority Actions

1. Create and implement a set of activities for the promotion and strengthening of technical assistance and horizontal cooperation regional, hemispheric and international states and with relevant international organizations.
2. Promotion of the exchange of best practices on training, specialization and professional development of the staff responsible for implementing demand and supply reduction policies.
3. Maintain consistent, across-the-board participation in regional and international drug law enforcement forums, to ensure that the drug situation in The Bahamas' are considered in the formulation of drug control strategies and policies, and for the exchange of information and ideas that would improve responses to the illicit production, trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
4. Strengthen international and regional coordination measures to prevent crimes related to drug trafficking such as small arms trafficking, extortion, human smuggling, trafficking in persons, money laundering illegal immigration.
5. Ensure that NADS continues to liaise with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to designate Bahamas delegations to regional and international drug control meetings and forums, monitor reporting obligations, including coordination of the preparation of questionnaires and other documents to be submitted to regional, hemispheric and international organizations, and organize the management of international drug control meetings hosted by The Bahamas,
6. Strengthen multilateral cooperation as defined in the international legal instruments related to the world drug problem, with respect for human rights. This will include reaffirming The Bahamas' commitment to regional and international initiatives of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), including the Santo Domingo Pact and the Regional Heads of Narcotics Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), will be maintained.

7. Continue to work closely with the Inter-American Commission on Drug Control (CICAD) of the Organization of American States in implementing the Hemispheric Plan of Action, 2016-2020 and execute the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), as an accurate measure of the Strategy's progress and impact.
8. Strengthen the relationship with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), particularly through the Council for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE). This will include working with other Caribbean states in supporting the work of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) and as well, the work of the Egmont Group.
9. Strengthen the relationship with the Cooperation Programme on Drug Polices between the European Union, Latin American and Caribbean Countries (COPOLAD) which seeks to improve coherence, balance and impact of drug police, through the exchange of mutual experiences.
10. Promote common understanding of national legal norms, regulations, and internal procedures for the implementation of hemispheric judicial cooperation mechanism and mutual legal or judicial assistance related to drug trafficking and related crimes.

Objective 2: Promote and strengthen bilateral cooperation and coordination mechanisms to foster technical assistance, improve exchange of information and experiences, and share best practices lessons learned on drug policies and related crimes.

The Bahamas enjoys sound bilateral agreements with states in their mutual interest to strengthen partnerships in drug control and forge new partnerships. The Bahamas and the United States, in particular, continue a long-term, mutually beneficial bilateral partnership to counter illicit transit trafficking in drugs, generally destined for the United States. Operation Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands (OPBAT) the 29 year tripartite flagship cooperation agreement among The Bahamas, the United States and the Turks and Caicos Islands plays an important role in drug interdiction efforts in air and maritime space of the parties.

The Sandy Bottom Project, which includes the expansion of the RBDFs fleet and substations and strategic islands throughout the archipelago will add value to the effectiveness of other Bahamas/United States cooperation efforts. The presence of RBDF marines stationed aboard various United States Coast Guard vessels operating in Bahamas territorial waters will allow United States law enforcement officials to better intercept vessels in Bahamian territorial waters suspected of being engaged in transnational criminal activities, including drug trafficking.

Under the Enduring Friendship Program, the state-of-the-art interceptor vessels donated by the Government of the United States have helped to substantially improve The Bahamas maritime interdiction capability. Bahamas-United States Inter-Agency joint operations and intelligence sharing across a broad range of law enforcement organizations have helped to disrupt the illicit drug trade in The Bahamas maritime and air space.

The Bahamas/United States relationship will be strengthened during the course of this new Strategy including expanding bilateral cooperative framework of which the existing agreements and program form an integral part. It does so in recognition of the important progress that has been made and the significant results that have been achieved, for the mutual benefit of both countries.

Priority Actions

1. Promote common understanding of national legal norms, regulations and internal procedures for the implementation of bilateral judicial cooperation mechanisms and mutual legal or judicial assistance related to drug trafficking and related crime.
2. Strengthen mechanisms and processes to speed up the handing of requests for mutual legal assistance on investigation and forfeiture of assets derived from drug trafficking and related crimes.
3. Continue to development and implement ongoing specialized technical and professional overseas training programs for key stakeholders in anti-drug agencies.
4. Improve ongoing work in OPBAT and the JTF to intensify joint initiatives against illicit drug trafficking networks operating in The Bahamas and in the territory of the OPBAT partners.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL TREATIES
 & RELATED TREATIES AND INSTRUMENTS TO WHICH
 THE BAHAMAS IS A STATE PARTY

TREATY/AGREEMENT	SUCCESSION /ACCESSION	SIGNATURE	RATIFICATION
United Nations Convention against Corruption, 2003	10 January 2008 (a)		
United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000		9 April 2001	26 September 2008
Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Supplementing the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime 2004		9 April 2001	26 September 2008
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children Supplementing the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime 2003		9 April 2001	26 September 2008
Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and components and Ammunition, Supplementing the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime 2001		9 April 2001	26 September 2008
United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic In Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances 1988		20 December 1988	30 January 1989
United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961 as Amended by the 1972 Protocol	13 August 1975 (s)		
United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971	31 August 1987 (a)		

Appendix B

Inter-American Drug Control Related Treaties and Instruments to which The Bahamas is a State Party

TREATY/AGREEMENT	SUCCESSION /ACCESSION	SIGNATURE	RATIFICATION
Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing Of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials (1997)		15 April 1998	5 June 1998
Inter-American Convention against Corruption (1996)		2 June 1998	9 March 2000
Inter-American Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters		26 April 2001	22 April 2009

Appendix C

Bilateral & Trilateral Instruments into which The Bahamas have Entered

INSTRUMENT	COUNTRY	EFFECTIVE DATE
Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters	Canada	10 July 1990
Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Cuba and the Commonwealth of The Bahamas to Combat International Drug Trafficking	Cuba (Done at Havana)	10 May 1996
Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and The Bahamas Concerning the Investigation of Drug Trafficking and Confiscation of the Proceeds of Drug Trafficking	United Kingdom	October 1990 (Signature 28 June 1988)
Agreement between the Government of The Bahamas and the Government of the United States concerning the Interdiction of Narcotics Trafficking	United States of America (Done at Nassau)	6 March 1985 (Signature 6 March 1985)
Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the United States of America	United States	17 February

And The Bahamas on the Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances	of America (Done at Nassau)	1989 (Signature 17 February 1989)
Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of The Bahamas Concerning Cooperation in Maritime Law	United States of America	29 June 2004 (Signature 29 June 1989)
Memorandum of Understanding between the United States, The Bahamas and The United Kingdom, including Turks and Caicos Islands, Concerning Cooperation in the Fight against Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs through the use of Equipment and Personnel Based at Great Inagua and Such Other Bases as may be Established in the Turks and Caicos Islands (DPBAT)	United States of America (Done at Washington D.C.)	12 July 1990
Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands (OPBAT) – An agreement with the United States and the Turks and Caicos Islands for the collaboration of law enforcement agencies of the signatories in interdicting and disrupting narcotics networks using the islands as launch points into the United States	United States of America	March 1982
Treaty between the United States of America and the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters	United States of America (12 June 1987)	18 July 1990 (Signature August 1987)

**Bilateral & Trilateral Instruments
into which The Bahamas have Entered (cont'd)**

INSTRUMENT	COUNTRY	EFFECTIVE DATE
Agreement correcting the text of the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters	United States of America (Done at Nassau)	4 February 1988 (Exchange of Notes 27 January & 4 February 1988)
Agreement concerning a Cooperative Ship-rider and Over-flight Drug Interdiction Program for Joint Operations	United States of America	1 & 6 May 1996 (Exchange of Notes)

Appendix D

Local Anti-Drug Stakeholders (NGOs)

ORGANIZATION	ORGANIZATION HEAD	FUNCTION
<p>Bahamas Association for Social Health (BASH) Columbus Avenue Chippingham P.O. Box SS-5372 Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 356-2274 bashbahamas@hotmail.com</p>	<p>Mr. Terry Miller Executive Director Ms. Lowena West Director/Management</p>	<p>To substantially reduce crime, violence and drug abuse in communities in The Bahamas</p>
<p>Great Commissions Ministries International The Erma Miller Centre #16 Wulff Road P.O. Box N-1444, Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 326-7833 info@gemglobal.org</p>	<p>Mr. Walter Hanchell President Mrs. Minalee Hanchell Executive Director Mr. Luke Deal</p>	<p>Promoting reconciliation, restoration and hope for persons affected by poverty, crime, drug abuse and broken relationships.</p>
<p>Teen Challenge Bahamas Marshall Road P.O. Box SS-6754 Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 341-0613 tchallenge@coralwave.com goshonfox08@gmail.com</p>	<p>Mr. Eric Fox Executive Director Mr. Goshon Fox Assistant Director</p>	<p>Facilitating Life Transformation (one Person at a time)</p>
<p>Hope Centre P.O. Box GT-2353 Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 356-6549 thehopecenter@gmail.com.</p>	<p>Mr. Carlos Reid Executive Director</p>	<p>Mentoring young people to be productive citizens</p>
<p>Prison Fellowship P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 394-1338</p>	<p>Mr. Anthony T. Sands President Mr. Eric Josey Executive Director</p>	<p>Assist inmates and their immediate families during the inmate's incarceration and with the reintegration of inmates into society upon their release.</p>
<p>U.S. Embassy P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 322-1181</p>	<p>Ms. Jamie Martin INL Director Mrs. Katrina Russell</p>	
<p>Arawak Port Development Arawak Cay P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 357-9975</p>	<p>Mr. Mike Maura Jr. Chief Executive Officer</p>	

Local Anti-Drug Stakeholders (GOs)

AGENCY	AGENCY HEAD
Financial Intelligence Unit Frederick Street P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 356-9808 director@fiubahamas.bs	Mr. Reuben Smith Director Mr. Basil Collie Deputy Director
Department of Public Prosecution, Office of The Attorney General John F. Kennedy Drive P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242)502-0400 attorneygeneral@bahamas.gov.bs	Mrs. Jewel Major Chief Counsel Mr. Keith Cargill Senior Counsel
Royal Bahamas Police Force Police Headquarters East Street N-458 P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 322-4444 info@royalbahamaspolice.org	Mr. Elliston Greenslade Commissioner of Police Ch. Supt. Samuel Butler D/C DEU Sgt. Jestina Rigby –Statistician, DEU ASP Carlton Adderley D/C, Marine Support Services Section
Royal Bahamas Defence Force Coral Harbour P.O. Box N-3733 Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 362-1818	Mr. Tellis Bethel Acting Commodore Mr. Clarence Dean Lt. Commander
Bahamas Customs Department Thompson Blvd P.O. Box N-155 Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 323-02-3384	Dr. Geannie Moss Assistant Comptroller Ms. Carla Bain Superintendent of Customs
Bahamas Department of Correctional Services Fox Hill P.O. Box N-504 Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 364-9855	Mr. Patrick Wright Commissioner of Corrections Ms. Stephaine Pratt - Supervisor Bradley Strachan – Prison Officer
Department of Immigration P.O. Box N-831 Nassau, The Bahamas (242)502-0523 williampratt@bahamas.gov.bs	Dr. William Pratt Director Mr. Stephen Laroda Senior Immigration Officer
Ministry of Education Thompson Blvd P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 502-2769 willardbarr@coralwave.com	Mr. Willard Barr Acting Director of Planning & Research Mrs. Mazarian Powell SEO Guidance Mr. Albert Clarke
Department of Legal Affairs, Law Reform. Office of the Attorney General P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242)356-0146	Mrs. Fern Bowleg Senior Counsel
Port Department	Patrick McNeil

Prince George Wharf P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 322-2049 PORTDEPARTMENT@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS	Port Controller
Bahamas National Drug Council P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 325-4633/4 bndc@batelnet.bs	Mrs. Bridgette Rolle Director Ms. Marian Pinder Technical Officer
Adolescent Health P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242)328-3248	Mr. Tyrone Johnson Counsellor
The National L.E.A.D. Institute P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 461-6431	Mr. Troy Clarke President & CEO
Health Information Services P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242)502-4802	Mrs. Camille Nairn Manager Ms. Nanika Braithwaite Statistician
Ministry of Youth P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242)502-0708	Mr. Darren Turnquest Director Ms. Jasmine Harper Youth Officer Ministry of Youth/Education
Judiciary P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 502-4042	Mr. Andrew Forbes Deputy Chief Magistrate
Bahamas Information Services Rusty Harcourt Drive P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 326-5803	Mr. Matt Maura Media Officer
Bahamas National Drug Agency Ministry of Health P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242)502-4736	Dr. Anne Rolle Pharmacist
College of The Bahamas P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 302-4300	Anstascia Forbes -Director Dr. Christiene Curtis - Sr. Counsellor

Department of Rehabilitation/ Welfare Services P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 322-6317	Ms. Sonia Saunders Chief Probation Officer
Community Counselling Assessment Centre P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242) 376-2663	Ms. Julia Meadows Senior Welfare Officer
Ministry of Foreign Affairs P.O. Box Nassau, The Bahamas (242)	Mrs. Roselyn Rodgers-Cezaire Senior Assistant Secretary
Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre	Dr. Eugenia Combie

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Acting Medical Chief of Staff

Ms. Rochelle Basden
Sr. Clinical Psychologist

Ms. Alelia Adderley
Senior Welfare Officer

Appendix E

Drug & Associated Laws of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas

ACT	COMMENCED ON
The Dangerous Drug Act, Chapter 228 The Dangerous Drug (Amendment) Act 2011	28 December 2000 3 November 2011
The Proceeds of Crime Act, Chapter 93	28 December 2000
The Financial Intelligence Unit Act Chapter 367	28 December 2000
The Financial Transactions Reporting Act Chapter 368	28 December 2000
The Financial and Corporate Service Providers Act , Chapter 369	28 December 2000
The Mutual Legal Assistance (Criminal Matters) Act Chapter 98	20 August 1990
Bail Act, Chapter 103 The Bail (Amendment) Act, 2011	22 September 1994 3 November 2011
The International Business Companies Act, Chapter 309	28 December 2000
The Firearms Act, Chapter 213 Firearms (Amendment) Act 2011	17 July 1969 3 November 2011
The Criminal Justice (International Cooperation) Act Chapter 105	28 December 2000

Drug & Associated Laws of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas cont'd

The Penal Code, Chapter 84	1 January 1927
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The Penal Code (Amendment) Act 2011	3 November 2011
The Pharmacy Act, Chapter 227	17 December 2009

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Bahamas Department of Statistics

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