



REGIONAL DIALOGUE

Good Practices and Lessons
Learned on **Drug Policy
and Development
in the Americas**

WEBINAR
**JULY 7
2020**

09:00 AM COLOMBIA

10:00 AM WASHINGTON

■ Organized by Colombia, CICAD Vice President. With the technical support of the CICAD Executive Secretariat

CONCEPT NOTE

Webinar

REGIONAL DIALOGUE
GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSON LEARNED ON DRUG POLICY AND
DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMERICAS

July 7, 2020 9:00-10:30 a.m. (Bogota)/10:00-11:30 a.m. (Washington, D.C.)

CONTEXT

The world drug problem continues to be complex, dynamic, and multi-causal, with adverse effects on health, social cohesion, citizen security, the integrity of democratic institutions, development, and economic activities in the countries of the Western Hemisphere, with political, economic, social, and environmental costs. This calls for a comprehensive, balanced, multidisciplinary, and evidence-based approach that fully respects human rights and fundamental freedoms, and takes into account the causes of the problem.¹

Illicit drug production and trafficking are on the rise in the Hemisphere, despite the enormous efforts and resources that have been devoted to fighting the problem. The illicit drug market includes traditional substances such as cocaine, cannabis, and heroin, as well as synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS), opioids and opiates, and chemical precursors diverted from the lawful industry to the manufacture of illicit drugs. Therefore, the countries of the Americas must join efforts to strengthen their capacity to effectively control the production, trafficking, and marketing of illicit drugs in the region. Some of the main factors for concern are the intense levels of violence associated with drug trafficking, together with changes in the patterns and prevalence of drug use in the Hemisphere, and their disproportionate impact and effect on the most vulnerable groups.

The onset of drug use at an early age continues to be a concern at the regional level. The non-medical use of controlled prescription drugs, synthetic drugs, opiates, and opioids shows how consumption patterns are changing in the region, presenting new challenges, not only for the treatment of substance users, but also for public health and drug policies in general. To reduce the consequences of the drug problem, particularly among our most vulnerable populations, countries must adopt policies that take into account a gender perspective and that are based on a public health approach, focused on the well-being of the individual and respect for human rights.²

In this regard, each country has made progress, in accordance with its domestic legislation and institutional capacities, in developing and implementing projects, strategies, plans, programs, and public policies on drugs that seek to provide effective responses to these increasingly complex phenomena. Countries can learn from each other by sharing research and good practices, always bearing in mind that a policy that works in one country may not work in another. Therefore, it is important to understand and acknowledge these efforts and exchange experiences that guide those responsible for developing national drug policies, to ensure they are appropriate and up-to-date. These policies should also address the challenges posed by drug markets and consumption rates in the twenty-first century, while incorporating crosscutting approaches of human rights, gender, and development with social inclusion, and taking into account cultural and age appropriateness.

Taking action to address the illicit drug problem is a common, shared responsibility of all countries, and, as a transnational phenomenon, it must be dealt with in a comprehensive and

1. Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission. *Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs, 2016-2020*, approved at the sixtieth regular session of CICAD: Nassau, Bahamas, November 2-4, 2016.

2. OAS-CICAD. *Report on Drug Use in the Americas 2019*, at: <http://cicad.oas.org/Main/pubs/Report%20on%20Drug%20Use%20in%20the%20Americas%202019.pdf>

coordinated way. Any solution to the world drug problem must be dynamic and based on consensus throughout society and the international community. It is therefore necessary to offer opportunities for reflection and discussion to analyze the recommendations of experts and specialized national and international organizations.

The regional consensus has called for comprehensive development measures of various kinds and scopes, aimed at eliminating the factors that cause poverty, social exclusion, and environmental degradation to avert the involvement of vulnerable populations in activities connected with illicit drug production and trafficking, among other things.³ Emphasis has also been placed on the importance of promoting the design and implementation of programs; the exchange of experiences and good practices; the dissemination of the achieved results; the design and/or improvement of monitoring and evaluation systems for programs aimed at reducing illicit crops and improving the wellbeing of the communities, through indicators that measure their medium- and long-term effectiveness; the strengthening of State presence; the promotion of the participation of local communities and relevant organizations; and the promotion of cooperation initiatives with the private sector, civil society, and international financial institutions.⁴

OBJECTIVE

To provide an opportunity to present and share progress made by countries in the Americas in the implementation of their drug policies and development efforts to address the world drug problem, bearing in mind the specifics of their domestic legislation and each country's level of development, so as to build consensus on the need for cooperation and institutional strengthening.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To present best practices, strategies, and national plans of OAS member states to address the world drug problem, particularly strategies on social integration and comprehensive and sustainable alternative development.
- To identify the challenges and obstacles that OAS member states still face as they address the complexities of the world drug problem in the Hemisphere.

METHODOLOGY

Panelists will give brief presentations on the progress made by their countries in the implementation of national drug policies. The moderator will then ask questions designed to identify consensus, points of agreement, and challenges for the future.

PARTICIPANTS

Participation in this forum will be by invitation to CICAD representatives of OAS member states, permanent missions and permanent observer missions to the OAS, representatives of CICAD's various experts groups, international organizations, civil society organizations, academia, and international experts.

3. OAS General Assembly, 2013 Declaration of Antigua Guatemala "For a comprehensive policy against the world drug problem in the Americas" (AG/DEC. 73 (XLIII-O/13) corr. 1, paragraph 19.

4. *Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs 2016–2020*. http://www.cicad.oas.org/mem/Activities/PoA/PoA-Version_Final-ENG.pdf.