



The OAS Inter-American Commission of Women, WOLA, IDPC, Dejusticia and ACEID are pleased to invite you to attend a lunchtime event:

Women, Drug Policies, and Incarceration in the Americas

**1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Monday, April 25, 2016
The Padilha Vidal room**

This event will take place during the 59th Regular Session of the CICAD.

A light lunch will be served and simultaneous interpretation will be provided.

The use of prison as a response to drugs has a disproportionately negative impact on women, who are being incarcerated at an alarming rate. Many of them have little education, live in poverty, and are the primary caregivers of dependent persons—children, young people, older persons, and the disabled. Even though they bear the brunt of punitive policies, these women rarely pose any threat to society. Most are arrested for low-level yet high-risk tasks (small-scale drug distribution, or transporting drugs); they become involved in response to poverty, or at times due to coercion by a partner or relative. Their incarceration contributes little if anything to dismantling illegal drug markets or improving public security. To the contrary, prison tends to worsen the situation, limiting their chances of finding decent and legal employment once on the outside, thus perpetuating a vicious cycle of poverty, involvement in drug markets, and incarceration.

What role can policymakers play to address this situation, and how can changes in drug policies help end this vicious cycle? To address that question, a group of experts who work in government, academia and civil society organizations produced a new publication, **“Women, Drug Policies, and Incarceration: A Guide for Policy Reform in Latin America and the Caribbean.”** The guide offers a roadmap for officials and reform advocates for implementing policy changes that could benefit the thousands of women incarcerated on drug charges across the Americas.

Agenda

Opening Remarks

Carmen Moreno

Executive Secretary of the OAS Inter-American Commission of Women

Presentation of “Women, Drug Policies, and Incarceration: A Guide for Policy Reform in Latin America and the Caribbean”

Nischa Pieris

OAS Inter-American Commission of Women

Discussants:

Andrea C. James

Executive Director of Families For Justice As Healing; The National Council For Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls; and formerly incarcerated woman, United States

Luiz Guilherme Mendes De Paiva

National Secretary for Drug Policy
SENAD, Government of Brazil

Sergio Hernández Chaparro*

Principal Researcher, Dejusticia, Colombia

Moderator:

Coletta Youngers

Senior Fellow, WOLA; Associate, International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC)

* To be confirmed.