



Ministry of National Security
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Opening Statement (DRAFT)

for the

Sixty-first Regular Session of the Inter- American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) Opening Session

April 24-26, 2016

Washington D.C., United States

His Excellency Nestor Mendez, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS),

Ms. Claudia Paz y Paz, Secretary of the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security,

Mr. Adam Namm, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD),

Distinguished Commissioners and visiting delegations,

Members of the OAS Diplomatic Corps,

Special invited guests,

It is my distinct pleasure and honour to welcome you to the 61st Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), under the chairmanship of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. I wish to take this opportunity to extend sincere appreciation to Assistant Secretary General Nestor Mendez for taking time out of his busy schedule to be with us this morning, and to welcome to the OAS family, Ms. Claudia Paz y Paz and Mr. Adam Namm, on this their first CICAD meeting since having been appointed to their respective roles as Secretary of the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security and Executive Secretary of CICAD. I congratulate you both as you lead the important charge of addressing hemispheric security and drug related challenges in the region.

Today, we gather as Member States of the OAS, to continue ongoing dialogue on the complexity and diversity of the world drug problem, its direct and indirect effects on our societies, and national and hemispheric efforts in mitigating the negative impact of the drug trade. In his remarks, during the 60th Regular Session of CICAD, held in Nassau, The Bahamas, and in recognition of the 30th Anniversary of the Commission, Secretary General Almagro admonished that significant interventions must be taken to curb or eliminate drug trafficking in the region, and that all governments must partner in order to discourage drug trafficking. Our concerted efforts toward the higher goal of winning the war against drugs should, therefore, serve as the basis upon which we as Member States design new policies, update regulatory frameworks and devise effective solutions suitable to the needs of our respective countries and the wider Western hemisphere. An important outcome of the 60th Regular Session of CICAD was the successful adoption of the Hemispheric Action Plan on Drugs 2016 – 2020. It is anticipated that this new action plan will chart the course of drug control efforts in our region.

Since assuming the chairmanship of CICAD, The Bahamas has continued to support, and to collaborate with Member States in countering the hemispheric illegal drug trade. The Bahamas Government remains actively engaged with international drug control bodies such as the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (UNCND) and CICAD, and has undertaken, through the Ministry of National Security, the establishment of the National Anti-

Drug Strategy 2012-2016, which provides a comprehensive, integrated approach aimed at countering the drug problem in The Bahamas. We look forward to continued engagement with the CICAD Executive Secretariat, and are committed to supporting the work of the OAS in identifying effective ways in which to address the world drug problem.

As we proceed with this morning's opening ceremony, The Bahamas, in its capacity as Chair, in conjunction with the CICAD Executive Secretariat, looks forward to a productive three days of dialogue, particularly given the cross section of drug related issues, strategies and approaches that will be presented during this 61st Regular Session. The Bahamas is hopeful that with the expertise shared throughout this Session, the hemisphere will be better poised in improving the effectiveness of our collective responses to the drug problem, in the mutual interest of all Member States.

I thank you.