Framework for the Expansion of Comprehensive and Sustainable Alternative Development in the Americas

FRAMEWORK FOR THE EXPANSION OF COMPREHENSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

In the Americas

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COMPREHENSIVE AND SUSTAINABL
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EXPERT GROUP - CICAD/OAS

FRAMEWORK FOR THE EXPANSION OF COMPREHENSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMERICAS[iii]

Affected peoples and communities need two things: the implementation of proven initiatives and honesty about those that have failed.

By: The CICAD/OAS Group of Experts on Comprehensive and Sustainable Alternative Development[iii]

Executive Summary:

1. OAS member states increasingly understand the need to promote development and social integration strategies for vulnerable groups[iv] involved in drug production, processing, distribution, trafficking, or consumption. These strategies should occur within a framework of sustainable development and rule of law,[v] in order to instill trust between all public and private stakeholders at both the national and international levels.

2. As a result, the concept of traditional alternative development in the context of drug policy has evolved, using inputs from new development theories and trends, to account for the realities of social, economic and public security conditions that it aims to explain and affect. At present, OAS member states are sharing their expanded understanding of alternative development through lively, and sometimes controversial, debate.

3. In this context, such an expanded analytical framework for Comprehensive and Sustainable Alternative Development ("DAIS" in Spanish, for Desarrollo Alternativo Integral y Sostenible) in the Americas manifests itself through initiatives specific to the states and populations

involved. This framework seeks to create comprehensive approaches to the issue, which prioritize human development; address economic, social, educational, public health, environmental and political issues (through a multi-sectoral, social inclusion); affirm respect human rights and gender equality; sustain and strengthen local, national and international alternative development budgets and programs; and address the problem of drugs from the various links in the chain of production, processing, distribution, trafficking and consumption.

4. The Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs 2016-2020, in conjunction with the operational recommendations document of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the world drug problem (UNGASS 2016), and the objectives and targets of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, set the stage for CICAD to contribute to this new approach.

Objective:

5. This document aims to help generate better public drug policies that target illicit economies both in rural areas (in which alternative development has traditionally been applied) as well in the urban environments. As a consequence, it also aims to implement effective programs tailored to the needs, priorities, and challenges of OAS member states.

Background:

6. DAIS is part of a set of reasonable, long-term, wide-ranging measures for sustainable development efforts that address socio-economic drug-related factors. This is consistent with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution of 19 April 2016, highlighting the joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem. DAIS, along with crop eradication and interdiction, constitute the three pillars of the international community's "balanced approach" to mitigate the world drug problem, as expressed in the United Nations' 2015 World Drug Report: p. 77)[vi]. The report acknowledges alternative

development as an evolving concept that extends beyond supply reduction. This report and the [UN General Assembly Resolution 68/196, Guiding Principles on Alternative Development,](url) highlight the point that advocating alternative development to reduce the availability of illicit drugs and control the underlying causes of illicit drug trafficking is a global responsibility that goes beyond the so-called "producing countries" to include "transit" and consumer nations.

7. Furthermore, [the Declaration of Antigua Guatemala 2013 "For A Comprehensive Policy Against The World Drug Problem In The Americas",](url) encourages members states to promote comprehensive and sustainable alternative development programs and policies as part of their national drug control policies—including integrated or alternative preventive development programs that are designed to eliminate the factors causing poverty, social exclusion and environmental degradation when appropriate. This approach in turn seeks to prevent vulnerable populations from participating in illicit drug production and trafficking.

8. Similarly, the [CICAD/OAS Hemispheric Drug Strategy](url) (2010) incorporates alternative development and related preventive, comprehensive and sustainable measures in accordance with respect for human rights and the realities of each country. An agreement among the member states in the current 2016-2020 Plan of Action reflects these measures to "design, implement and/or strengthen long-term programs which are broad and aimed at development that includes rural and urban alternative, comprehensive and sustainable development programs, and, as appropriate, preventive alternative development, in accordance with the policies, legislations and needs of each country, as appropriate." These initiatives promote activities aimed at mitigating the environmental impact of illicit drug cultivation and production; involving local communities in crime prevention, community-building, protection, security, and justice; as well as stimulating innovation, entrepreneurial spirit, employment, and trust between the people and their governments.

9. During the fifty-eighth regular session of CICAD-OAS in Trujillo, Peru (held in November 2015), under the presidency of Peru, the Expert Group on Comprehensive and Sustainable Alternative Development (GEDAIS) was relaunched. GEDAIS is a "highly technical space to address new problems, threats and trends that integrated and sustain alternative development efforts focused on human development in different countries in the hemisphere."

10. In 2016, the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Drugs (UNGASS) on the World Drug Problem took place. During UNGASS, seven pillars that represent significant progress towards a more balanced and inclusive international drug strategy were considered. Member states were encouraged to work towards both the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and address the drug problem, since the two are interrelated. The UNGASS 2016 outcome document created a blueprint, commitments and operational recommendations for states to design policies to shape the deeply interconnected agendas of drug and development policy. The document also emphasized that the SDGs apply to drug policy. As a result, consistent with the SDGs, the impact of policies on social welfare (including improving social inclusion, reducing crime and violence, eradicating extreme poverty, incorporating gender perspectives, and protecting human rights) should determine their failure or success.

11. In addition, during the UNGASS 2016 process, member states agreed to put into practice the alternative development operational recommendations approved by the United Nations Resolution, reiterating their "joint commitment to effectively counter and address the world drug problem, the illicit cultivation of plants used for the production of narcotic drugs and illicit drug manufacture, production and trafficking." Member states also agreed to address related socioeconomic issues, emphasizing the causes and consequences of illicit cultivation, production, manufacture and drug trafficking in rural and urban areas, through carrying out comprehensive and sustainable development policies and programs.

Analytical Framework:

12. Consequently, one of the current challenges is developing a comprehensive, consensus-based approach that translates the above recommendations into concrete actions and policies. This approach should also account for the distinct realities, visions, priorities, implementation levels and experience of OAS member states.

13. OAS member states took an important step towards identifying the scope of DAIS, by adopting an inclusive, human-focused foundation for such policies. DAIS works to address social, economic, educational, health, environmental and political aspects of these issues, which it terms "dimensions." These "dimensions" manifest themselves via cross-cutting sustainability and environmental resource management; social inclusion; prioritization of human rights, gender equality, ethnic diversity and, age focused approaches for diverse populations affected by drugs; and consideration of local and regional particularities.

14. Historically, DAIS focused on rural contexts, promoting legal development alternatives for populations involved in the cultivation or manufacture of illegal drugs. Such measures were also combined with a strategy for preventive alternative development, in order to reduce the factors that incentivize at-risk populations to engage in illicit activities related to drug production and trafficking. This strategy thus seeks to create diverse legal alternatives for these at-risk populations so they can enjoy sustainable livelihoods that satisfy their needs.

15. In recent years, however, several OAS member states directly or indirectly affected by illicit drug cultivation or production, transit, and sales have advocated for a broader approach to this issue based on their specific contexts and needs. The conditions in these countries have further exacerbated certain social problems, compelling them to seek out and promote

legitimate, viable, and sustainable ways for vulnerable communities in both rural and urban areas to make a living.[vii]

16. It is important to note here that in the last few decades, Latin America has become the most urbanized region on the planet.[viii] Not surprisingly, several countries face serious problems of micro-trafficking and drug consumption, fueled in part by migration flows to urban areas. Although urban development can be considered a global trend with multiple positive effects, its rapid growth entails significant risks, especially when it involves radical and powerful changes such as the transition from a rural to an urban way of life. In turn, the drug issue can be interpreted as a concrete and problematic expression of some of the most complex global challenges arising from rapid and unplanned urbanization. It can be analyzed as a cause or consequence of other processes that affect human development, which are associated with insecurity, environmental decay and social exclusion. Moreover, the magnitude and impact of the problem make it critical[ix] to consider urban planning as a policy solution for many different situations.

17. This context of rapid urbanization in the hemisphere has resulted in a clash between rural and urban realities, which has generated sociocultural transformations. In that context, DAIS policies must be sufficiently flexible to adapt to these transformations according to the geographic contexts in which they are implemented.

18. All of these factors underline the need to promote comprehensive, sustainable development in both urban and rural contexts and rectify dynamics creating social exclusion in areas where drug trafficking and consumption are more common. Such policies must also address educational, health, housing, and security needs, which affect the development of vulnerable peoples and communities.

19. Migrant workers (from rural to urban areas and vice versa), both domestically and internationally, rarely have access to existing wealth and opportunities. For many, moving

to the city means unstable, unequally paid or poorly paid jobs, along with other forms of abuse and deprivation.

20. This context highlights the importance of addressing the socioeconomic problems derived from illicit drug cultivation, as well as trafficking, consumption and related crimes. It is important to recognize that those who live in extreme poverty and scarcity are among the most vulnerable to drug-related problems. Therefore, empowering citizens requires strengthening community resilience, reducing vulnerability and strengthening the rule of law and governance.

21. This expanded framework of comprehensive and sustainable alternative development includes actors linked to every stage of drug production and trafficking, including: cultivation, processing, distribution, sales, consumption, as well as the use of chemical precursors, or of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). In the context of sustainable development, it also includes alternatives to incarceration for certain drug-related offenses, as well as promoting human rights, the rule of law, peace, justice, security, a culture of lawfulness and social integration.

22. It is important to note that human development is the path to and the objective of social, economic and political processes. Nonetheless, human development goes beyond economic growth, which is focused exclusively on the expansion of a single variable—income. A holistic and/or systemic development approach (such as that of human development) includes other dimensions, and complements and mutually reinforces the objectives of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

23. Therefore, economic growth is a means to human well-being, as opposed an end unto itself. It includes the advancement of human dignity, autonomy, empowerment and inclusion of the target population. In this process, economic growth represents the starting point, and takes into account its relationship to the value chain.[x]

24. Development is intended to diversify a population's economic, social, cultural or political opportunities. Therefore, states play an important role promoting sustainable, alternative and integrated development policies and strategies through security and governance, public investment in infrastructure and basic services, job creation, access to credit, harm mitigation, fostering environmental conservation, and furthering sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and a gender perspective. These objectives and challenges highlight the urgent need for official institutions and civil society to coordinate and focus approaches, which is essential to promoting trust in affected areas.

25. DAIS was conceived as an official plan to implement policies promoting harmonious, sustainable, integrated territorial development. It thus offers countries a package of measures aimed at providing comprehensive, efficient and effective public services to guarantee the socioeconomic inclusion of at-risk or affected communities, and of reducing the likelihood that urban and rural populations participate in the illicit drug trade. Furthermore, per the suggestion of some countries, DAIS aims to help people build productive enterprises to create jobs and opportunities, which ultimately reduce relapse into drug consumption and abuse. Accordingly, and with the help of civil society, DAIS addresses the structural causes of the drug problem.

26. At a global level, there is a tacit acknowledgment state action alone cannot solve certain problems, such as climate change and the scarcity of financial resources for development. This represents an opportunity to involve the private sector in DAIS.

27. There are also several cultural elements to be addressed in each country. It is important to remember that human development refers to providing inclusive spaces for people to freely choose a life that fully meets their expectations. In this regard, some member states have recently prioritized strategies for integrated, territorial sustainable development[xi], which encourage the involvement of local governments and jurisdictions affected by drug-related

illicit activities. To achieve this goal, adequate planning and coordination of policies and strategies are required.

28. In relation to this, it is worth noting that in recent years, several innovative programs have been launched, seeking to replace models of forced eradication of illicit crops by the police and military with others in which producers actively participate in decision-making as citizens—thereby determining the future of their communities.[xii]

29. Although supply and demand have historically been treated as separate drug policy issues, in reality they represent two complementary elements of the drug problem that require a comprehensive approach. In addition, the drug problem has become multi-faceted, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, covering intersectional issues such as drug trafficking, drug abuse-related crimes, violence and drug use/abuse. The so-called producer countries are gradually realizing that drug use is increasing within their own borders, even in rural areas, and are starting to worry about addressing the social and health-related consequences of addiction, as well as finding the best measures to address them.

30. Additionally, the growing need for reliable and up-to-date data, new indicators, and improvements in efficiency have become relevant to the drug problem. In response, stakeholders should develop and apply best practices and lessons learned. It is also important to advocate systematization of knowledge,[xiii] including methodological processes that structure practices, knowledge, ideas, data and experiences in a manner that improves implementation of projects and strategies, as well as potential application of such methods in similar sociocultural and geographical contexts. These processes must reflect the connection between DAIS and other broader human development goals, such as the SDGs.

31. In this effort to expand comprehensive, sustainable alternative development in the Americas, the task at hand is incorporating this comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach; finding common ground to transform recommendations determined through consensus and

meetings into specific actions and public policies based on data, information, knowledge and experiences; and accounting for differences between countries, including their realities, problems, cultures, visions, priorities, level of implementation and experience.

32. Finally, we highlight the importance of developing joint efforts to face a problem that transcends borders and therefore cannot be addressed by each OAS member state on its own. Such efforts should be focused on sharing lessons learned, effectively managing knowledge, strengthening technical and financial assistance, and improving institutional resources and human capital—while still following principles of regional integration and national sovereignty.

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[i] Based on its view that consumption of coca leaf in its natural state is permissible, Bolivia has created its own policy on this matter that transforms alternative development into the idea of comprehensive development. Consequently, Bolivia asserts that the term "alternative" should not be used, and argues that it does not apply to its policies and programs. Jamaica also supports this approach.

[iii] Document prepared by the CICAD/OAS Group of Experts on Comprehensive and Sustainable Alternative Development.

[iv] Vulnerability: The characteristics and circumstances of a community, system or good that make them susceptible to the harmful effects of a threat.

[v] Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

[vi] Other important documents and efforts include: The Thematic Evaluation of Alternative Development from UNODC of 2005, the Technical Guide of Alternative Development in the Andean Region 2008, in 2010 the Report on the exchange of experiences between South Asia and Latin America, Resolutions 57 - 58 of the CND from 2013 related to the guiding principles of the United Nations on Alternative Development.

[vii] Sustainable livelihoods: This term include the possibilities, assets, including material and social resources and activities necessary to earn a living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can withstand and recover from tensions and shocks, while (A) still maintaining and improving present and future opportunities and assets, and (B) not damaging the existing natural resource base. It also "includes capacities, goods and activities that are required to generate income and sustain life. Sustainable livelihoods refer to people's ability to generate and maintain livelihoods and improve their well-being and that of subsequent generations. Families or households are considered to have sustainable livelihoods when they can cope and overcoming economic crises and adversity, while preserving their resources and capabilities and avoiding environmental degradation. For the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), livelihoods are the "mechanisms through which households meet their needs and face external shocks."

[viii] World Urbanization Prospects, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2014.

[ix] See 2013 OAS Report: "The Drug Problem in the Americas" and in particular, the thematic studies on "Drugs and Development", "Drugs and Public Health" and "Drugs and Security".

[x] The value chain is a sequence of related commercial activities (functions), from the provision of specific inputs for a product, to its primary production, transformation, marketing and final sale to consumers.

xi Comprehensive and sustainable territorial development: A form of promoting development that, although recent in Latin America, has already been applied in several places with positive results. Some entities and organizations are recognizing this knowledge as a methodology of structured, responsible, participative, dynamic action. Driven by local actors, it aims to build a socially and territorially cohesive and just order that is environmentally sustainable, and democratic and culturally diverse. Through this approach, Colombia seeks to facilitate the transformation of the territory and rebuild the social fabric in areas where for years, armed conflict and illicit crops reduced the possibilities of a stable future.

xii For more information see: Habeas Coca, Social Control of Coca in Bolivia, Linda C. Farthing and Kathryn Ledebur, Global Drug Policy Program, Open Society Foundations.

xiii The systematization processes include the identification, documentation and transfer of experiences and key lessons drawn from a project or an initiative, or a group of projects or initiatives to promote, learning and replication / expansion. Such systematization does not merely include with the description of the experience and the results, but implies a deeper vision of how to attain what was achieved, in order to facilitate the interchange and adoption of development solutions. It asks: What worked and what did not? What were the key factors for success? What could have been different and why?