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CONTROL COMMISSION**

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**U.S. OPENING REMARKS FOR “INNOVATIVE RESPONSES TO EMERGING
TRENDS IN THE REGION**

U.S. Opening Remarks for “Innovative Responses to Emerging Trends in the Region”
Thursday, May 9, 2019, 14:30 (90 minutes)

Good afternoon everyone. I am pleased to join you as we come together through CICAD to identify challenges – and solutions – to our region’s most pressing drug threats. At the U.S. Department of State, I help lead the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs – or INL – whose core mission is to disrupt and deter the transnational crime and drug trafficking that threatens national security and public safety. Coordinating national, regional, and international action is an essential ingredient in the solution set for curbing global transnational organized crime and drug trafficking.

We’ve been talking a lot about “action” in various multilateral settings, most recently this past March during the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), which emphasized via its 2019 Ministerial Declaration the need for concerted and sustained action at all levels to address the world drug problem. Additionally, back in September 2018 on the margins of the UN General Assembly, many of us within CICAD pledged to redouble our commitment to such action when we joined President Trump’s Call to Action on the World Drug Problem. The Call to Action committed countries to advancing national action, including through the development and implementation of national drug control strategies, aimed at more intensely targeting the threats posed by illicit drugs. As we examine innovative responses, we should recall these commitments to strengthen action at the national, regional, and international levels and consider incorporating some of these responses into our national contexts, as appropriate.

One particular drug challenge for which we must emphasize the need to deploy responses is a threat we know too well; the threat posed by illicit synthetic drugs. Misuse of synthetic drugs represents *the* major narcotics threat of this generation. It compounds the more conventional plant-based drug-control threats posed by heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine.

Innovations in technology and criminal entrepreneurship are enabling and exacerbating this problem. Criminals engaged in this lethal trade from all around the world are manufacturing these drugs, selling them online, and trafficking them globally in small, hard to detect packages through the international mail and express consignment shipments.

Fortunately, we made great strides during the 62nd CND in March to highlight a variety of interventions that can be used to specifically address synthetic drug threats. These approaches are underscored in a CND resolution on effective and innovative national approaches to address synthetic drug threats. Additionally, during the CND, UNODC launched its “UN ToolKit on Synthetic Drugs,” which is comprised of a library of national-level interventions that can help countries to advance these sorts of innovative responses to synthetic drugs. The ToolKit contains a comprehensive set of technical assistance programming opportunities, including successful legislative models for class-wide scheduling of synthetic drugs, as well as enhancing controls on precursor chemicals, and that is just the beginning. As an online platform, the ToolKit will serve as a self-assessment tool that allows countries to identify and address the specific synthetic drug challenges they are facing.

With me today are representatives from Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. We are looking forward to an interesting dialogue with these panelists as we do what we do best; pioneer drug-control policies and programs in the hemisphere that invoke real progress in protecting our citizens from the world drug problem. Without further ado, please allow me to introduce Maria Veronica Brasesco, the Director of Argentina’s National Drug Observatory.

[After Brasesco’s presentation]

Thank you, Ms. Brasesco. Now I would like to turn to my colleague Jose Marin, Head of Chile’s Drug Observatory.

[After Marin's presentation]

Thank you, Mr. Marin. Now I would like to turn to my colleague Diego Olivera, of Uruguay's National Drug Board.

We've heard from our expert panelists today about some truly innovative responses to address drug threats. We encourage you to explore ways to incorporate these responses into your national approaches to combat the world drug problem, including as follow-on from the President's Call to Action. Notably, many of these responses are incorporated into the UN ToolKit, and we encourage you to reach out to UNODC to see in what ways components of the ToolKit might be appropriate for implementation within your national contexts.

At this time, I would like to open the floor for any comments or questions from Member States.