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**ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
HEMISPHERIC DRUG STRATEGY
(December 10, 2020)**



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Organization of
American States

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security
Washington, DC, USA

Hemispheric Drug Strategy

INTRODUCTION

The world drug problem constitutes a global challenge that negatively affects the public health, security, human rights, environment, and well-being of all humanity. It also undermines sustainable development, justice systems, political and economic stability, and democratic institutions, representing a threat to security, democracy, good governance, and the rule of law.

Similarly, in the Americas, the drug problem is an increasingly complex, dynamic, and multi-causal phenomenon that has adverse effects on health, social cohesion, citizen security, the integrity of democratic institutions, development and economic activities in the countries of the region, with political, economic, social, and environmental costs. Responding to this problem requires a comprehensive, balanced, multidisciplinary, and evidence-based approach, in full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, under the principle of common and shared responsibility, which takes into account the causes of the problem.

This Hemispheric Drug Strategy supports the commitments undertaken by member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) in the Declaration of Antigua, Guatemala, “For a comprehensive policy against the world drug problem in the Americas” (2013); in the Resolution of Guatemala, “Reflections and guidelines to formulate and follow up on comprehensive policies to address the world drug problem in the Americas” (2014); in the outcome document of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem, held in New York City, entitled, “Our joint commitment effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem” (2016), to include promoting the collaboration between the criminal justice and public health sectors, among other relevant commitments, and in the Ministerial Declaration of the 2019 Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Additionally, this Strategy acknowledges the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and notes that the efforts made by member states towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and effectively addressing the world drug problem are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD, by its Spanish language acronym) is the competent regional forum in the Western Hemisphere to oversee implementation of this Strategy, via the associated Plan of Action. Its Executive Secretariat (ES) will execute programs and actions in support of this Strategy as requested by the Commission and, in coordination, with other specialized organizations as deemed necessary.

The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), as part of the ES-CICAD, is the approved OAS mechanism to monitor and evaluate members states’ application of this Strategy and associated Plan of Action with impact and evidence-based indicators, thereby strengthening national policies and actions as well as identifying the main national and regional strengths and challenges to addressing the hemispheric and world drug problem in a more coordinated manner. Member states will actively participate in the MEM and update it periodically.

Through this Strategy, OAS member states recognize the importance of efforts made to address the world drug problem, including ratification and implementation of relevant international conventions, and at the same time, acknowledge the need to strengthen drug policies, strategies, and actions. This Strategy also seeks to position member states to adapt to new realities, including those emerging as a result of global crises, such as the coronavirus pandemic, which have spurred criminal activity and drug trafficking groups, while exacerbating public health crises.

Member states therefore adopt the present strategy:

CORE PRINCIPLES AND CRITICAL ELEMENTS

1. Effective compliance with relevant and applicable international law and respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, observing the principles of sovereignty and the territorial integrity of states, non-intervention in the internal affairs of states, human rights, fundamental liberties, inherent human dignity, and equal rights and mutual respect among states.
2. National drug authorities are established and/or strengthened, placing them at a high political level and providing them with the necessary capabilities to coordinate the formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and, when appropriate, decentralization of national drug policies.
3. Member states design and implement national drug policies and/or strategies duly coordinated with other public policies and/or strategies, in concert with the government, civil society, and other organizations to address fundamental causes and consequences of the world drug problem.
4. Member states are responsible for providing the resources required for effective implementation of their national drug policies, and for maintaining a balance between demand reduction and supply reduction activities in accordance with their national realities.
5. Member states develop and implement evidence-based drug policies and strategies, and where possible, data that informs and evaluates strategies is collected in a format that permits comparison and analysis across countries.
6. Member states establish and/or strengthen national observatories on drugs, or similar technical offices, to develop national drug information systems, foster scientific research, and to generate, collect, organize, analyze, and disseminate information that is used as a basis for the development and implementation of evidence-based drug policies and strategies that reflect dynamic realities.
7. Member states, in order to maintain an adequate response to the ever-evolving world drug problem, promote periodic, independent evaluations of their policies, programs, and interventions through active participation in the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), to inform and guide the allocation of resources and to ensure sustainable activities appropriate for each national context.
8. Member states establish and/or strengthen early warning systems (EWS), using a broad range of research methods and sources of information, to collect timely information that supports the development and implementation of effective national drug strategies.
9. Drug policies include a focus on public health and safety, taking into account gender, age, cultural context, and human rights, with the individual at the core. Drug policies also seek to minimize the adverse public health and social consequences of drug use, promote social inclusion with a treatment and recovery oriented approach, and reduce inequalities.
10. Member states consider the specific needs of at-risk populations¹ in the formulation of drug policies and programs, as well as family and community members that support and work with them, with a human rights perspective that considers gender, age, and multiculturalism.
11. Member states commit to protecting the safety of individuals, societies, and communities, including by promoting effective measures that address the links between drug-related crimes and corruption as part of national anti-corruption and drug control strategies.

¹ At-risk populations may include: women, children, adolescents, LGBTQ+ persons, prison population, indigenous groups, migrants, people who use drugs, homeless individuals and other socially disadvantaged groups.

12. Member states commit to establishing a sufficient and effective legal and institutional framework, clearly delineating between punitive and non-punitive responses to drug-related criminal justice sector interactions, and to establish best practices and effective legal procedures for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement personnel.
13. Member states design, adopt, and implement alternatives to incarceration for minor or non-violent drug-related offenses, with a gender, age and cultural perspective, in accordance with their national, constitutional, legal, and administrative systems, and relevant and applicable international instruments, as well as respect for human rights.
14. Member states foster proportional sentencing where appropriate, that addresses the seriousness of drug and other related offenses.
15. Member states implement policies and actions that foster development with social inclusion, reducing inequality, poverty, and crime associated with illicit drug markets and drug use.
16. Member states prioritize international cooperation at the bilateral, regional, and global level, including technical assistance, to address the world drug problem in our hemisphere, with the goal of continual improvement of member states' policies on drugs, and with respect of the principle of common and shared responsibility, which is fundamental to strengthening hemispheric and regional cooperation, including at the national, regional, and international levels.
17. Member states ratify, accede to, and comply with relevant drug-related international conventions, as well as comply with other relevant Inter-American conventions to which they are a party.
18. Member states, recalling that participation of civil society and the private sector is important to the development and implementation of drug policies and programs to address the world drug problem, encourage a broad and open debate so that all sectors of society may contribute to strengthening national, regional, and international drug strategies.
19. Member states promote transparent cooperation and synergies with the private sector to address and counter the world drug problem. As such, member states engage with private sector entities to foster innovative approaches, exchange information on evolving trends, and safeguard supply chains, products, and platforms from criminal exploitation.
20. Member states recognize the new realities and challenges posed by the world drug problem, including those emerging as a result of global crises, such as the coronavirus pandemic, which necessitate national policies and strategies that provide greater flexibility, adaptability, and innovation, in accordance with countries' priorities and needs.

MEASURES RELATED TO DEMAND REDUCTION

Drug use is a complex social, multi-causal, dynamic, and heterogeneous issue that requires an interdisciplinary and intersectoral evidence-based public health approach. Demand reduction is a priority component necessary to a comprehensive and balanced approach as part of addressing the world drug problem. The following guidelines are applicable to demand reduction activities:

1. Demand reduction policies include, as essential elements, universal, selective, and indicated prevention, environmental prevention, health promotion, early intervention, treatment, care, rehabilitation, social integration, recovery, reducing adverse consequences, and related support services.
2. Member states address the respect for human rights, the stigmatization processes, the exclusion, and social marginalization associated with substance use disorders, which deter individuals from seeking, accessing, and/or completing demand reduction services.
3. Demand reduction policies include dissemination to the general public and target groups of up-to-date, evidence-based information, on the risks associated with drug use and available prevention,

treatment, and recovery support services, through social media, mass media, and other new information and communications technology (ICT) platforms.

4. Member states implement a variety of evidence-based prevention programs aimed at specific target population groups, and local settings and regions with different substance use habits and modalities, and risk factors; together, these programs constitute a comprehensive national prevention system.
5. Member states promote education and the development of skills for populations or individuals at increased risk, such as children and adolescents to develop and foster a healthy lifestyle.
6. Prevention efforts aimed at the adult population through family, community, and workplace prevention programs, include raising awareness of the dangers of driving and working under the influence of psychoactive substances, among others.
7. Member states promote availability and facilitate increased access to care and treatment programs with informed consent, where consistent with national legislation.
8. Member states carry out research and evaluation on access to services, including on coverage and barriers to access, treatment effectiveness, as well as quality assurance.
9. Treatment services offer a range of comprehensive therapeutic intervention models, that are evidence-based and follow internationally validated quality standards oriented toward treatment completion and sustained recovery.
10. Treatment models consider the needs of different populations, taking into account factors such as gender, age, socio-economic context, community,² and culture, and other social determinants of health.
11. Member states explore the means of offering treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery support services to criminal offenders who use drugs, as an alternative to criminal prosecution or imprisonment in appropriate cases of a minor or non-violent nature.
12. Member states make available, where appropriate, prevention and treatment services to offenders in corrections facilities, prior to their release, to increase the chances for a successful transition between incarceration and release, re-entry, and socio-occupational integration.
13. Member states, through their national observatories on drugs or other research institutions, generate information on the prevalence of drug use, use of services and demand for treatment, incidence of use, and trends over time using sound systematic data collection practices, scientific research, and standardized methodologies to monitor use in key populations.
14. Member states develop and/or strengthen the mechanisms needed to gather and analyze qualitative and quantitative information that will facilitate the development of evidence-based public policies, guidelines, and comprehensive strategies.
15. Member states, through their national observatories on drugs or other research institutions, collect data, conduct studies and research that contribute to the identification and monitoring of emerging patterns of use, new drugs of use, and modes of drug use that could provide timely information for first responders and sharing good practices.
16. Member states strengthen ties to academic and research institutions, as well as specialized non-governmental organizations, to foster and encourage scientific research and studies on the various aspects of the demand for drugs.
17. Member states promote and strengthen continuing education and training at all levels for health professionals, social workers, technicians, and others involved in implementing drug demand reduction activities.

² Community includes ethnicity.

18. Member states' drug demand reduction programs are subject to ongoing monitoring, scientific evaluation, and updates, based on evidence-based practices.

MEASURES RELATED TO SUPPLY REDUCTION

The illicit supply of drugs and other associated criminal activity requires the adoption, implementation, and improvement of comprehensive, balanced measures aimed at reducing the availability and trafficking of these substances in illicit markets, enhancing interdiction efforts, and reduce violence and related crimes, while promoting their accessibility and availability for medical and scientific purposes and traditional practices, according to national legislation. Member states will pursue supply reduction activities under the following guidelines:

1. Member states strengthen national capacity to control and contain the illicit cultivation, production, trafficking, and distribution of plant-based and synthetic drugs, and for the interdiction of these substances, including actions to control the diversion of chemical substances and precursors used in their processing.
2. National drug supply control programs focus on preventing and reducing the illicit cultivation, manufacture, production, and trafficking of synthetic and plant-based drugs, including adopting or strengthening appropriate domestic controls over the international trade, manufacturing, and distribution of precursor chemical, in accordance with the international drug control conventions and domestic law enforcement measures.
3. Member states incorporate a human rights and gender perspective in supply-related control programs, projects, and activities, and promote gender mainstreaming in agencies and organizations in charge of drug control.
4. Member states update and strengthen their legal and institutional frameworks for the effective monitoring and interdiction of precursors and essential chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, including chemical substances and cutting agents, to prevent diversion of these substances to illicit activities, including trafficking, and periodically update national lists of controlled chemical substances, based on evidence.
5. Member states endeavor to coordinate national control lists to ensure substances are not imported into countries where those substances are prohibited, thereby maximizing efforts to hinder trafficking opportunities.
6. Member states strengthen national capacity and regional cooperation by adopting measures to enhance interdiction and to prevent trafficking in and diversion of materials and equipment used in the illicit production or manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, including tableting presses and encapsulating equipment.
7. Member states take the necessary steps to prevent the diversion of pharmaceutical products with psychoactive properties for illicit use and ensure access for legitimate medical and scientific purposes.
8. Member states apply measures to limit the use of narcotic drugs and psychoactive substances exclusively to medical and scientific purposes, while ensuring their availability and access by patients who require them, in accordance with international drug and fundamental human rights treaties.
9. Member states ensure programs and strategies that promote the access to controlled substances for medical and scientific use.
10. Member states develop and optimize mechanisms for identifying and disrupting the trafficking of drugs and related crimes through illicit online sales and via international and domestic postal service systems and express consignment shipping.

11. Member states reinforce control mechanisms at land border crossings, rivers and lakes, as well as sea and air ports to prevent or reduce the use of legal trade routes for the trafficking of drugs and related materials.
12. Member states prioritize dismantling criminal organizations and their support networks to combat trafficking of drugs and chemical precursors, and related crimes. Law enforcement measures, including seizures and confiscation of assets, address not only the prosecution of those engaged in illicit activities, but also the crimes that facilitate and are associated with trafficking, such as corruption, money laundering, and firearms.
13. Member states develop specific intelligence gathering and sharing tools, including enhanced regional coordination and international databases, to detect criminal organizations' exploitation of illicit land, air, riverine, lakes, and maritime trafficking routes, and drug trafficking concealment methods.
14. Member states promote, strengthen, and facilitate the routine and real-time operational exchange of intelligence among law enforcement and related agencies in accordance with national legislation and relevant provisions of international instruments, to detect, interdict, investigate, and prosecute drug trafficking and related crimes, providing each other with the widest measure of mutual legal assistance, and responding expeditiously to requests.
15. Member states promote actions to reduce negative consequences to the environment, including territories inhabited by indigenous groups, caused by the world drug problem, while also taking into consideration the impact on the hemisphere, in accordance with national legislation.
16. Member states promote national programs to reduce the illicit cultivation and illicit production of drugs, through effective law enforcement measures and comprehensive and sustainable alternative development measures, where applicable, including social welfare strategies and targeted attention, according to the particular needs of sub-national regions.
17. Member states generate data on illicit drug and precursor production, trafficking, and related trends, using systematic data collection practices, scientific research and analysis, and standardized methodologies.
18. Member states collect data on drugs to inform the international scheduling process and increase the rate at which substances are internationally controlled.
19. Member states adopt and/or improve information-gathering to inform and support the development and implementation of public policies and programs to counter illicit drug supply.
20. Member states conduct, through their early warning systems (EWS), studies and research to identify and monitor new and emerging trends, as well as provide current data on illicit drug supplies, to inform decision-making and appropriate responses.
21. Member states adopt measures to enhance international cooperation in criminal investigations, [] so as to facilitate the apprehension, prosecution, and conviction of members of transnational criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking activities and related crimes, and their support networks.
22. Member states strengthen national, regional, and international measures aimed at enhancing operational cooperation to prevent transnational organized criminal networks involved in illicit drug-related activities from acquiring and trafficking firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials, among other illicit activities, including human trafficking.
23. Member states establish, update, or reinforce, as appropriate, legislative and institutional frameworks on the prevention, detection, interdiction, investigation, prosecution, and control of the laundering of proceeds from drug trafficking, related financial crimes, the diversion of controlled chemical substances to illicit channels, other serious transnational crimes, and networks supporting the same, in accordance with the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

24. Member states establish or strengthen, as appropriate, national entities responsible for the management and disposition of assets and chemical substances, seized and/or forfeited in cases of illicit drug trafficking, money laundering, and other related crimes.
25. Member states promote, where appropriate, harmonization of national legal norms, regulations, and procedures to implement hemispheric judicial cooperation mechanisms and mutual legal assistance in connection with drug trafficking and related crimes, as well as the networks supporting the same.
26. Member states enhance coordination with private sector entities to prevent diversion and deny criminals access to the materials, platforms, and services exploited by criminal organizations for the illicit manufacture, production, trafficking, and distribution of drugs.
27. Member states work jointly to create mechanisms that address the needs and vulnerabilities generated in local regions particularly affected by the illicit cultivation, production and trafficking of drugs.