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**INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE
CONTROL COMMISSION**

CICAD

SEVENTY-FIFTH REGULAR SESSION

May 7, 2024

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**Remarks by Lt Col Edward Croft
CICAD Vice Chair**

**Director, Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy
Antigua and Barbuda**

Remarks by Lt. Col Edward Croft, Vice Chairman
at the 75th Regular Session of the
Inter American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)

Tuesday 7th May 2024
Commencing at 10:00 a.m. virtually

Mr Chairman, thank you for the invitation to deliver a few remarks in relation to this agenda which focuses on the CICAD Annual Report for 2023, and includes the location and dates of the 76th Regular Session of CICAD.

Permit me to recognise the distinguished members of the Head Table

- Rodrigo Ferres, Secretary of State to the Presidency and Chairman of the National Drug Board of Uruguay and Chair of CICAD
- Ivan C Marques, Secretary
Secretariat for Multidimensional Security (SMS) /OAS
- Ambassador Adam Namm, Executive Secretary, CICAD/OAS
- My good friend and colleague, Dr. Daniel Radio, Secretary General, National Drug Council and President of the Institute for Regulation and Control of Cannabis (IRCCA), Uruguay

Distinguished fellow colleague Commissioners, leadership of the OAS Secretariat for Multi-dimensional Security and the team at the Executive Secretariat of CICAD as we gather for this 75th Regular Session of CICAD, I am pleased to extend greetings from Antigua and Barbuda and offer you all, a pleasant good morning.

On behalf of my country, I thank the Executive Secretariat of CICAD, for this comprehensive report on its activities and the utilisation of the funds entrusted to its management.

I commend the outstanding body of work undertaken by all of the Units, which is ably directed by the executive team led by Ambassador Namm and Ms. Angela Crowdy. Permit me to recognise each of the Unit Chiefs for their commitment, hard work and dedication.

Marya Hynes, Head of the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs

Jimena Kalawski, Head of the Demand Reduction Unit

Antonio Lomba, Head of the Institutional Strengthening Unit

Adrian Noble, Head of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism Unit

Rafael Parada, Head of the Supply Reduction Unit

The breadth of activities which include building institutional and staff capacity through the various training initiatives, is matched by the production of meaningful publications that would help guide member states as they continue to plan for and undertake, the management of their drug situation. No series of interventions would be complete without strong empirical data as well as a robust monitoring and evaluation component.

The foregoing could only be accomplished through adequate funding, and I recognize all the donors and “in kind” contributions from member states. The number scale of actions taken speak to the efficient and responsible management of the funds received.

I am also very impressed with CICAD’s ability to partner with other international organizations, as I think that collaboration and alignment of complimentary initiatives, only strengthens our ability to address this international problem.

Therefore, in my humble view, the work reflected in this report is an excellent manifestation of a thorough approach taken by the Executive Secretariat.

Antigua and Barbuda, therefore has no hesitation in endorsing the report.

Let me turn my attention briefly to the 76th Regular Session of CICAD. As Vice Chair, it is our hope that distinguished Commissioners will elect Antigua and Barbuda as the next Chair of CICAD. With this in mind, I am presently holding discussions with the government of Antigua and Barbuda to determine if the upcoming CICAD 76 will be held in my beautiful country. Here we have coined the slogan, “the beach is just the beginning” representing 365 white and pink sandy beaches, cricket, pageantry, music, culinary delights and so much more.

At this time the government is focusing its efforts on the hosting of the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4). Thereafter the hosting of T20 Cricket World Cup and the celebration of Carnival makes for a very busy schedule for the government and its agencies. However, once a decision is made, I will ensure that timely communication is forwarded to CICAD for immediate dissemination to the member states.

My government is acutely aware of the importance of hosting this conference, as the last time it was hosted in the English speaking Caribbean, was over eight (8) years ago. The significance of

this occasion is also historic, as it will be the first time any country of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) will serve at this level. It is therefore fitting that hosting the 76th Regular Session of CICAD occurs in Antigua and Barbuda.

As I close, please permit me to share a few thoughts for possible topics for the next 76th Regular Session of CICAD. I submit the following for your consideration:

- Collective and focused attention to the emerging intersection of policy and culture as more countries move toward legalising/decriminalising cannabis.
- Identification of the issues that are peculiar to the Caribbean, and development of interventions.
- Increased engagement of Caribbean institutions in order that all resources and ideas can be fully utilised to develop a regional approach to solving our biggest problems.
- Exploration of the impact that the transshipment of drugs have particularly on the Caribbean region and seek to give more prominence to the issue and the solutions associated with that activity.
- Ongoing attention to the growth of activities related to the smuggling of chemical precursors, as well as the increased availability of New Psychoactive Substances, and opioid analgesics such as fentanyl, which challenge all our agency's collective ability to respond.

Mr. Chair, fellow Commissioners and the team at the Executive Secretariat, I am convinced that as we continue working together, we can make a positive difference in our Hemisphere. We all have a duty of care to leave this hemisphere in a better place than we met it. Thank you and God Bless