Caribbean Heads of Government, meeting in Belize City, Belize, from 3-5 February 2002, endorsed all the recommendations of the UNDCP/ CARICOM sponsored High-Level Meeting on Drugs and Crime, held in Trinidad & Tobago in December last year. The Heads expect further cooperation between the United Nations and CARICOM to assist in the development of the preventive strategies required to deal with both drug demand and supply, as well as the links of the illicit drug trade to crime and violence in the Region.

Presiding over the Heads’ conference, Prime Minister of Belize, Hon. Said Musa, stated, “We must bring our attention to bear on two of the most urgent issues that are wreaking havoc on our populations: the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the intolerable increase in the incidence of crime that have made personal security the overriding concern of all our peoples.”

INCB ISSUES WARNING ON CYBER CRIME

The most recent International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) Report warns that the Internet is creating challenges to drug law enforcement, and that young people are facing new dangers from drug dealers in cyberspace. An official statement by Professor Hamid Ghodse, President of the INCB, which coincided with the February 2002 release of the Board’s Report, cautioned, “Committing a crime in an electronic environment – a cyber crime – is easy.” According to Professor Ghodse, few resources are required to access and use the Internet, the personal danger for the criminal and the likelihood of detection are also greatly reduced, because cyber crimes are difficult to investigate and prosecute.

The INCB urged Governments to raise public awareness, especially among parents and teachers, that young people using the Internet may be exposed to messages promoting drug use. The absence of tough provisions in existing legislation against cyber crime is of urgent concern, the INCB added.

The definition “cyber crime” can be used to describe violations of law that are committed and/or facilitated through the use of electronic media. The 2001 Report cites the 1999-2000 Hemispheric Report issued by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) as noting that in some countries the Internet had become the most widely used medium for expanding the production of synthetic drugs and that globalization, instant communication and

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electronic fund transfers had been utilized by organized criminal groups to improve the efficiency of drug trafficking activities. Anyone with a computer and Internet access, says CICAD, can find drug recipes on the Internet. The Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering has also warned that Internet use adversely affects the globalization of financial markets, pointing to the impact of cyber crime on money laundering as an additional risk factor.

There is no comprehensive legislation relating to offences committed in cyberspace. Similarly, there are no guidelines as to which country’s laws should prevail when an offence is pursued, and what protocols should govern cross-border investigations. Other complications include technical and resource challenges, such as computer encryption that ensures privacy to the user. According to the INCB, other issues involving privacy and freedom of expression are also of concern both to industry and civil liberty groups. Future challenges, say the Board, include developments such as: an increase in opportunistic forms of crime online with the expansion of the Internet; an increase in transnational crime; further exploitation of technological advances by organized crime groups; an increase in money laundering; an expansion in drug-related crime; an increase in crimes by minors involving information technology; a reduction in the capacity of law enforcement to conduct interception and surveillance activities; jurisdictions without adequate legislation becoming sanctuaries for criminals; and the imposition of limitations to existing extradition and mutual legal assistance frameworks.

To address these challenges, the use of advanced technologies has been incorporated into the fight against drug related crime. There is a growing number of websites with illicit drug advisory content that warns visitors about the dangers of drugs. Further progress has also been made in creating specialized software programs that make it easier to track financial transactions over the Internet. The private sector has begun to forge alliances with law enforcement to ensure greater protection against high-tech crime. Internet service providers are now becoming regulated in some countries and service contracts are incorporating national laws into online ‘terms and conditions’ for users and websites.

International and regional initiatives against high-tech crime are currently being pursued by organizations such as the UN to offer a working model to combat cyber crime. The 2001 INCB Report recommends that Governments ensure appropriate laws are introduced at the national level to deal with crimes committed in the electronic environment. The Board further suggests that technical assistance be provided to developing countries, and that law enforcement agencies employ technology specialists to enhance these efforts. Financial institutions are advised to review their measures against money-laundering to recognize these new technologies. The Board concludes that the development of a United Nations Convention against cyber crime with a global classification and definition, that balances concerns about security and privacy, ought to be considered.

William Mbaho
HEADS OF GOVERNMENT ENDORSE HIGH–LEVEL MEETING ON DRUGS AND CRIME

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The recommendations of December 2001 High-Level Meeting was a priority on the agenda at the Heads of Government Meeting in Belize City, Belize, from 3-5 February 2000.

As well as the drugs issue, the 11 Heads in attendance discussed implementation of the single market economy; the Interim Report of the Regional Task Force on Crime and Drugs; CARICOM’s response to the situation in Haiti; the closure of the Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC); and the CARICOM Mission to Trinidad and Tobago to discuss the electoral impasse.

The High-Level Meeting was held last December to review the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action. It was in 1996 that countries of the Caribbean Region and other interested partners first came together in Bridgetown to formulate the Barbados Plan of Action for Drug Control, Coordination and Cooperation for the Caribbean. With the Plan already over five years old and recognizing the need for continued coordination and cooperation, the Region and its partners decided to discuss the functioning of the Plan to date -- its successes and shortcomings -- as well as mapping out a future way forward.

The Honourable Basdeo Panday, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, addressing the opening session of the High-Level Meeting, had emphasized the need to formulate a joint regional strategy to address the link between drugs and the illicit traffic in arms, organized crime and other regional threats. He had also stressed the impact on the Region of deportation of convicted criminals and the rise in violent crime and other associated social ills.

Dr. Edward Greene, CARICOM Assistant Secretary-General, reiterated the vital need for inter-sectoral regional collaboration to facilitate information-sharing, surveillance and interdiction, while deepening international partnerships to safeguard vulnerable States in the region.

Dr. Michael Platzer, Regional Representative of UNDCP, noted the successes of the Barbados Plan of Action. He urged the pursuit of new strategies to address continuing threats and emerging global trends in criminal activities and drugs.

The High-Level Meeting reviewed the importance of legal cooperation and reforms; increasing the capacity of law enforcement agencies; reducing the demand for drugs; national and regional coordination; and priority elements on the way forward. The Meeting also recognized that there had been notable achievements by the Region, in particular legislative reform, anti-money laundering measures, training, demand reduction, the launch of the Caribbean Drug Information Network and the establishment of national joint headquarters for drug interdiction activities. It noted, however, that illegal drugs and other serious crime remained a threat to the region.

Special emphasis was placed on a number of priority elements for the consideration of Governments of the Region in enhancing the regional strategy against drugs and crime:

- Pursuing a balanced and integrated approach to demand and supply reduction;
- Addressing the relationship between drugs and social and health issues, such as, HIV/AIDS, poverty and domestic violence;
- Addressing the linkages between drug trafficking and other serious crimes, including corruption, trafficking in arms, terrorist financing and money laundering, trafficking in human beings;
- Strengthening institutional capacities, in particular resource mobilization;
- Facilitating alternative development;
- Becoming parties to and implementing the relevant regional and international instruments;
- Concluding a regional maritime cooperation agreement;
- Developing measures to deal with cyber crime;
- Expanding epidemiological research and development programmes;
- Developing adequate minimum standards of care for treatment and rehabilitation.

The CARICOM Task Force on Crime and Drugs is expected to take into consideration these recommendations in the formulation of a proposed new strategy on drugs and other serious crime. It also requests consultation with non-CARICOM States in this process.

“The agencies have come together, and we have established our Joint Operations Command Centre, which has coordinated alot of excercises, both inland and the the maritime. We’ve also had many eradication excercises, and all of these factors have led to an increase in the seizure rate. What this has shown is that if we all work together we can produce positive results.”

(Rear Admiral Kelshall, Director of the Strategic Services Agency, Trinidad & Tobago)
UN SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANNAN OPENS NEW UN HOUSE IN BARBADOS

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan officially opened the new UN House in Barbados on the first working day of 2002. He and Mrs. Annan were welcomed to Barbados by Prime Minister Owen Arthur and Deputy Prime Minister Billie Miller. Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Dominican Prime Minister Pierre Charles; and St. Kitts and Nevis Foreign Minister, Dr. Timothy Harris all attended the inauguration ceremony.

The 2001 Nobel Peace Prize Recipient addressed and audience of some 300 guests which included Barbados Chief Justice Sir David Simmons and Attorney General Mia Mottley, members of the diplomatic corps, senior government officials, business people and members of civil society.

In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, Secretary General Annan stressed that the region has increasingly become more vulnerable “to external economic shocks in key areas such as agriculture and tourism and drug trafficking”. Additionally, he stated, “The number of people in the region living with HIV/AIDS is rising rapidly.” “What happens in your nations is of great concern to the rest of the world,” observed the Secretary General. But while the UN was prepared to assist, he added, it was ultimately national governments that bore the main responsibility for implementing action to counter such problems.

Prime Minister Owen Arthur said international organizations such as the UN had to play a more supportive role so that the Caribbean could continue to successfully integrate itself into the global economy. “If we are to have any lasting impact on the struggle against terrorism, our strategy must also firmly embrace a revitalised international development agenda aimed at eradicating the conditions of extreme poverty and deprivation, intolerance and injustice that form the true breeding ground for terrorism,” Prime Minister Arthur said.

Deputy Prime Minister Billie Miller declared, “I believe that this building will greatly assist the Agencies of the United Nations in fulfilling their mandates in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. It provides them with a spacious and comfortable work environment and a base from which they can operate with maximum ease and efficiency. It is my hope that the United Nations House will contribute to a prevailing spirit of harmony and unity, within and outside its walls, and that this will foster even closer cooperation between those who occupy these premises and the governments and communities they serve.”

United Nations House will be home to UNDP; the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO); UNICEF; UNDCP and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The 5,500-square-foot building in a well established residential area just outside the capital, Bridgetown, was provided by the Government of Barbados.
Due to the events of September 11, the General Debate in the UN General Assembly was postponed until Mid-November. At that time the Prime Minister of Dominica, the Hon. Pierre Charles; the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Hon. P.J. Patterson; the Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados, the Hon. Billie Miller; the Deputy Prime Minister of Belize, the Hon. John Briceno; the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Hugo Tolentino Dipp; the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Felipe Perez Roque; the Foreign Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, the Hon. Timothy Harris; the Minister of Foreign Affairs for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Hon. Louis Straker; the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Suriname, Mrs. Maria E. Levens; the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, the Hon. Mervyn Assam; all spoke of the need to collaborate in fighting terrorism.

The Prime Minister of Dominica, while recognizing the importance of international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, pointed out that the events of 11 September have had a disturbing impact on vital sectors such as tourism, financial services and agriculture. He is concerned that the financial sector may be subject to inordinate pressure and linked to illegal activities such as money laundering. He also lamented that the Millennium goals appeared to be far from being realised and that there appears to be a lack of commitment to dealing with the HIV/AIDS crisis.

The Prime Minister of Jamaica said, “To defeat the forces of terror, our collective action must be firm, decisive and broad-based,” and saluted the efforts to elaborate the Comprehensive Convention Against Terrorism. The Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados was concerned about the redeployment of resources from other priorities such as the fight against narcotrafficking, extreme poverty, disease and environmental degredation. She underlined the importance of UNDCP, “whose work is providing critical support to the region in an extremely volatile economic and security environment.” The Deputy Prime Minister of Belize affirmed the urgent need for critical action to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and to recommit to the Millennium Declaration, the realization of a world with less poverty death and despair.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic also said that the Millennium Summit goals, international security disarmament, economic development, the equality of nations, are without a doubt, the primary and priority directives for the prevention against violence and crime.

“Only under the leadership of the United Nations will we be able to defeat terrorism,” declared the Foreign minister of Cuba, adding, “Cooperation and not war is the way.” Cuba has opposed the war in Afghanistan and reiterates that it can only bring more hatred and ever increasing dangers of new terrorist actions. Cuba has endorsed the convening of an international conference on terrorism under the aegis of the UN. The Foreign Minister of Haiti conveyed his country’s solidarity and support in the fight against terrorism, but emphasized that attention should be given to social economic and political factors that lead to terrorism.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Suriname emphasized the need for dialogue and peaceful coexistence at the national and international level. She stressed that the Caribbean still needs assistance in development, creating an environment to attract foreign investors, fighting HIV/AIDS, closing the digital divide and human development. “The marginalization of the poor and underprivileged create a hotbed for extremism and lawlessness,” stated the Foreign Affairs Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs for Trinidad warned that the spectre of terrorism should not deflect attention from other activities such as the illicit drug trade and the illegal trade in small arms. He announced his government had just enacted legislation authorizing the confiscation of assets resulting from drug trafficking. “The fight against drug trafficking is a transnational one,” stressed the Foreign Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, adding, “We cannot point figures or apportion blame. We need to take action.”

St. Lucia expressed concern about the growing economic instability which has given rise to increased levels of drug-related crime, and the global trade in small arms trade. Antigua was concerned that the cancer of drug-trafficking will continue to threaten human civilization until we fashion truly global responses to its menace. The Bahamas refered to its comprehensive legislation just enacted which resulted in its removal from the list of non-cooperative jurisdictions.
Only a few articles could not be agreed upon during the General Assembly discussions of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. Ambassador Richard Rowe of Australia who coordinated the negotiations on the 27-article draft convention said that given the spirit of cooperation shown combined with the necessary political will, the convention could be completed in the near future. This new Treaty is to fill in the gaps left by the previous sectoral conventions that address particular manifestations of terrorist activities, such as bombings, hijackings, hostage taking and financing of terrorist operations.

The General Assembly called upon all States to become parties to the existing Conventions (particularly those pertaining to terrorist bombings and financing of terrorism) and to enact the necessary legislation in order to bring to trial the perpetrators of terrorist acts and to cooperate with other States. It invited States to submit to the Secretary General information on their national laws and regulations. It welcomed the efforts of the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the Centre for International Crime Prevention to enhance the capabilities of the United Nations. The resolution urged Member States to cooperate with the Secretary General to provide technical and expert advice to States requesting assistance in becoming parties to the conventions and to exchange information.

Antigua and Barbuda as well as the Bahamas has enacted domestic legislation following the September 11 terrorist attacks. Although the Antiguan “Prevention of Terrorism Act” focuses on Osama bin Laden and the Al-Qaida organisation, the law prohibits and punishes any person who supplies military hardware, chemical weapons, training, technical advice or financial assistance to any terrorist or terrorist organization. Persons found guilty might be condemned to twenty-five years imprisonment. Moreover, the law provides that the assets of anyone designated by the Supervisory Authority as a terrorist must be frozen. If a financial institution fails to freeze or to report to the Authority the existence of funds belonging to a terrorist organization it can be liable for twice the amount it was required to retain, or a fine of $100,000 whichever is greater. Furthermore, the Authority can instigate an investigation of any financial institution having possession or having processed the funds of a terrorist and require the productions of all records.

Upon the recommendation of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly adopted 15 specific plans of actions to implement the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice, “Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century”. In each of the fifteen areas, concrete activities are set out for national and international action. For instance, in combating transnational organized crime, the development of legislation, strengthening investigative powers, sharing of information on the identities, whereabouts and activities of specific individuals, and the maintenance of a database to permit a more comprehensive analysis of patterns and trends are among the suggested actions.

To prevent corruption, a number of national actions to strengthen national governance systems, to achieve transparency and public accountability, to reduce opportunities for the transfer and proceeds of corruption, and to establish adequate investigative powers and criminal procedures to deal with corruption are outlined. It is hoped that a United Nations Convention against Corruption will be finalized by 2003.

Trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants are two other priority areas singled out. The emphasis is on protecting the victims while tracking down known traffickers and smuggling organizations. Establishing effective mechanisms for the export and import of firearms is the primary measure envisaged to prevent trafficking and diversion of small arms.

A long list of measures to deal effectively with the problem of money laundering including adequate regulatory, inspection and investigative powers are set down for national action. Member States are also to review their anti-terrorist laws and to cooperate with anti-terrorism agencies in other countries.

Effective community based crime prevention recognizes the close cooperation needed with civil society as well as measures to prevent racism. Support services for victims and witnesses of crime and national studies on victims of crime are recommended. Time-bound targets to address prison overcrowding, introduction of alternatives to imprisonment, and the improvement of prison conditions are promoted.
The General Assembly, in December, reaffirmed the importance of Member States meeting their commitments as set out in 1998 Political Declaration. In a resolution, co-sponsored by Bahamas, Barbados, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, the Assembly welcomed the guidelines for reporting on national follow-up as well as the preparations for the Ministerial segment of the 2003 Narcotics Commission that will focus on the progress made by States to implement the Action Plan. The resolution specifically calls upon States to adopt and implement measures to prevent the diversion of chemicals to illicit drug manufacture, in compliance with article 12 of the 1988 Convention. It also calls upon States to adopt national laws and regulations, within the agreed time frame, to strengthen national judicial systems and to carry out effective drug control activities in cooperation with other States. In its first operative paragraph, the General Assembly reaffirms that countering the world drug problem is a common and shared responsibility which must be addressed in a multilateral setting, requiring an integrated and balanced approach, and must be carried out in full respect for the sovereignty of States, non-invention in the internal affairs, and all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Resolution also urged all States to take appropriate action to address the linkages between the illicit traffic in small arms and illicit trade in narcotics drugs through inter alia, increased international cooperation and ensuring full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted by the UN Conference of the same name. The Assembly is deeply alarmed by the violence and economic power of criminal organizations and terrorist groups engaged in drug trafficking and other criminal activities, such as money-laundering and illicit traffic in arms, precursors and essential chemicals. The World Body is gravely concerned that despite increased efforts, the drug problem is still a challenge of global dimensions that constitutes a serious threat to the health, safety and well being of mankind. It undermines development-including efforts to reduce poverty, socio-economic and political stability and democratic institutions-and threatens the national security and sovereignty of States.

The Assembly called upon the international community to support the implementation of the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development by helping States with eradication and sustainable alternative development. It recognized the achievements of some States in eradicating illicit drug crops and urged all States to make similar efforts.

This same resolution welcomed the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted during the special session of the General Assembly on AIDS in June 2001 including the acknowledgement of the link between drug using behaviour and HIV infection.

Finally, the Assembly urged all States to make appropriate treatment and rehabilitation accessible for children, including adolescents, dependent on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, inhalants and alcohol as well as support preventive policies and programmes especially against tobacco and alcohol. It is alarmed by the rapid and widespread increase in the illicit manufacture, trafficking and consumption, in particular by young people of synthetic drugs and by the high probability that amphetamine-type stimulants may become the drugs of choice among abusers in the twenty first century. The global increase in the use of minors in the illicit production and trafficking in narcotics as well as the number of children starting to use drugs at an earlier age was noted with grave concern.

The Member States have asked UNDCP to provide an updated, objective and comprehensive assessment of worldwide trends in trafficking in narcotic drugs and to submit a report to the General Assembly in 2003 on the progress achieved in meeting the targets set out in the 1998 Political Declaration.

"...the United Nations stands foursquare against terrorism, no matter what end it purports to serve…we should all be clear that there is no trade-off between effective action against terrorism and the protection of human rights... in the long term, we shall find that human rights, along with democracy and social justice, are one of the best prophylactics against terrorism…Member States are, for once, really using this Organization in the way its founders intended – as an instrument through which to forge a global defense against a global threat… the Committee’s work has already highlighted the close connection between terrorism and other activities that the United Nations has been seeking to repress. I am thinking particularly of organized crime and the illicit traffic in weapons, drugs and other commodities such as diamonds.”
INCB CONDEMNS NEW CANNABIS POLICIES IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

In the past few years some countries in Europe have decriminalized the personal use of cannabis and preparatory acts such as cultivation and possession of cannabis.

In Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain, possession of cannabis is no longer considered a criminal offence and acts preparatory to personal consumption, such as acquisition, transportation and possession of cannabis are not penalized.

The Government of the Netherlands has issued guidelines that assign the possession of cannabis for personal use (up to 5gm) the lowest judicial priority, which means such acts are never prosecuted. These guidelines further permit “coffee shops” to hold stocks of up to 500g of cannabis to sell to customers 5g at a time.

Belgium has a bill before Parliament that possession of cannabis be exempted from prosecution.

In Switzerland, there is draft legislation, if adopted would provide for the decriminalization of both the non-medical consumption of cannabis and the cultivation, manufacture, production, possession, detention and purchase of cannabis as long as they constitute preparatory acts for personal consumption and not for third parties to consume. This legislation would restrict prosecution even for those who sell small quantities. The Government would regulate the cultivated areas, the points of sale, the personality of the traders, and the duty to keep accounts and records. This, the International Narcotics Control Board holds, not only contravenes the letter but also the spirit and essential objectives of the international drug control treaties. Under the 1961 Convention, the parties are required to limit exclusively to medical and scientific purposes the production, manufacture, export, import, distribution of, trade in, use and possession of drugs.

Six states in the United States have approved ballot initiatives allowing the use of “medical marijuana” and the relaxation of penalties for possession, thus creating exemptions for some people to consume the drug. However, the US Supreme Court ruled in May 2001 that cannabis has no medical benefits and is therefore not exempt to federal drug laws. The INCB has challenged the Government of Canada to state what scientific grounds it has decided to allow persons to smoke cannabis for “medicinal” purposes. The Board maintains that there has been no reliable scientific evidence of the safety and efficacy of smoking cannabis for therapeutic purposes. WHO should be involved in the evaluation of not only the potential medical utility of cannabis but also the extent to which cannabis poses dangers to human health. According to the President of the International Narcotics Control Board, there is no credible information indicating that relaxing drug laws reduces drug abuse. To the contrary, the progressive liberalization of drug laws in some countries over the last 20 years has been associated with a progressive increase in drug abuse. Dr. Ghodze strongly argues against the “normalization” of the social and recreational use of drugs, for although it may have short-term gains in saving police resources, it would have profound consequences for young people today and future generations. Moreover, adding another drug to the same category as alcohol and tobacco would be a historical mistake, especially at a time when policies aimed at fighting the abuse of those two substances are finally being given the attention that they deserve.

Michael Platzer

INCB 2001 REPORT RELEASED

On 28 February 2002 the International Narcotics Control Board Report for 2001 was officially release at press conferences in: Guyana at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by UNDCP Regional Representative Mr. Michael Platzer; in the Dominican Republic at the UNDP offices by UNDCP Deputy Regional Representative Mr. Flavio Mirella; and in Barbados at the UN House by UNDCP Regional Communications Officer Mr. William Mbaho.

**LEGALIZING CANNABIS WOULD BE ‘A HISTORICAL MISTAKE’**

Treating cannabis like alcohol and tobacco would be a “historical mistake”, according to the International Narcotics Control Board, whose annual Report was officially released in the Caribbean on 27 February at the CARICOM Headquarters in Georgetown, Guyana. The UN body is disturbed by the fact that while developing countries struggle to eradicate cannabis and fight the trafficking of the substance, certain European and North American countries tolerate the cultivation, trade and abuse of cannabis on their territory.

The INCB is also concerned about the widespread opinion in Jamaica and elsewhere in the Caribbean that cannabis is not a harmful drug, particularly among young people. The Board believes that the possession and abuse of cannabis should continue to be criminally sanctioned in accordance with international drug control treaties.

Any Government that believes there is scientific evidence that the control of cannabis under the UN Drug Conventions is not justified should submit its evidence to the WHO and request the rescheduling of the drug, according to the procedures established. The Board is particularly concerned that the gap between declared Government policy and actual practice undermines the universal commitments made to the UN Treaties.

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**PRECURSOR CONTROL LEGISLATION IN THE CARIBBEAN**


The Caribbean region is used as a transit point not only for drugs but also for precursors. Information available from law enforcement agencies suggest that precursors defined as licit chemical substances are moving through the Caribbean region to countries of Central and South America, where they are used to manufacture primarily cocaine and increasingly heroin.

These precursors are often manufactured by legitimate companies for licit industrial commercial uses. Traffickers purchase them in large quantities from these legitimate chemical sources with minimum scrutiny by law enforcement officials.

To counteract this problem various international instruments set out measures in this regard. One such example is the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 which obliges state parties to cooperate with one another with the goal of suppressing the transfer of precursors from licit to illicit channels.

Other suggested measures are found in the Model Regulations of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (OAS/CICAD) to Control Precursors and Essential Chemicals. From October 1999 to March 2000 CICAD conducted a series of assessments within the framework of the “Caribbean Chemical Precursors Control Project”, co-financed by the European Commission on the existing precursor situation in the region. Based on this assessment five priority areas were identified to be addressed in order to implement effective and efficient precursor control regimes in the Caribbean region in monitoring systems, training, coordination, equipment and legal development. Under this programme framework, legislative reform was prioritized as a first and important step towards an effective

![Diagram of the precursor process used to manufacture cocaine and heroin.](image)

resulted in the development of a joint project between UNDCP and OAS/CICAD. From the 14 Caribbean jurisdictions covered under this project, 12 countries have already received the necessary legal assistance provided by the project’s legal consultant Mrs. Hyacinth Lindsay, in drafting and updating their national precursor legislation and draft acts are under consideration. It is expected that all 14 countries will have up-to-date precursor control legislation ready for approval by their parliamentsat the end of the project to form the basis of the implementation of control systems.

Ingeborg Daamen
INCB NOTES INCREASED CARIBBEAN COOPERATION

The 2001 INCB Report commends Caribbean States for their increased cooperation in the Region’s efforts to fight money laundering and drug trafficking. This approval follows the assessment by Caribbean Governments of the progress made under the Barbados Plan of Action (specifically, the recommendations of the High Level Meeting on Drugs and Crime held in December and the suggested way forward).

Significant progress has also been made against drug trafficking and money laundering with the help and cooperation of various bodies in the Caribbean region.

The Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council (CCLEC) is currently instituting a computerized system to enable Customs authorities to track small vessels. It is also instituting training for Customs in container profiling and assessment and implementation of airport security controls.

The capabilities of forensic laboratories have also been upgraded. The Caribbean Council of Laboratory Heads was established as a Caribbean Community initiative to provide forensic services in court cases involving drug possession and trafficking in the Caribbean.

The Office of National Drug and Money Laundering Control Policy in Antigua was established as the base for a rapid response unit for handling drug-related crime in that country. The Caribbean Drug Information Network, launched in July 2001 to increase knowledge about drug abuse and improve changing drug abuse trends, continues to urge States to establish and further data collection systems.

Most countries have adopted National Drug Control Strategies: St Kitts and Nevis in 2001; Bahamas, Barbados and Haiti are currently finalizing plans. Antigua and Barbuda and St Vincent and the Grenadines have been urged to adopt plans. Antigua and Grenada have strengthened their legislation related to money laundering. Haiti has introduced new money laundering legislation. The Bahamas has established a financial intelligence unit. Barbados an anti-money laundering authority; Dominica and St Kitts introduced legislation but remain on the FATF list.

Jamaica is cooperating in drug control matters with its neighbors and the US in maritime law enforcement and extradition. Meanwhile, Cuba has seized 12 tons of illicit drugs and cooperated with US and other countries in the Caribbean.

Further recommendations from the High Level Meeting are that States allocate adequate funds to demand reduction initiatives, including treatment and rehabilitation. States are urged to determine patterns of drug abuse and disseminate results of epidemiological studies. The expansion of initiatives that promote life skills to help young people resist pressure to become involved in drug abuse and illicit trafficking are also encouraged. Countries are advised to introduce adequate precursor legislation, minimum levels of control not only to prevent the diversion of precursors, but also to avert the manufacture of synthetic drugs. In addition, States should adopt all the necessary instruments to prevent money laundering. The proposals for a Financial Investigation Unit for the Eastern Caribbean have progressed slowly; but there have been moves to draft an intra-Caribbean mutual assistance treaty, sign the OECS agreement on ground rules for mutual legal cooperation and checklist, and initiate a feasibility study in establishing a regional pool of prosecutors to handle major criminal cases.

Other needs to be met include finding more alternatives to imprisonment (such as community service orders in Barbados and Trinidad; drug treatment courts in Jamaica, Cayman Islands, Belize, and Bermuda), and implementing mentor programmes in the Eastern Caribbean. Greater emphasis is also placed on all States in the Caribbean where cannabis is cultivated; the Board calls for cultivation sites to be identified with a view to eradicating the drugs at source and thus reduce trafficking. The efforts of Jamaican law enforcement authorities in recent months to manually eradicate cannabis have been successful although concern remains about the widespread opinion in Jamaica that cannabis is not a harmful drug. The high levels of cannabis abuse throughout the country, the high cannabis-related crime rate and smuggling of cannabis out of the country reinforce the position that the possession and abuse of cannabis should continue to be criminally sanctioned in accordance with international drug control treaties.

The Government of the Dominican Republic has been urged to formally adopt a five-year national master plan against drugs abuse and trafficking, and to allocate sufficient resources for the implementation of the plan. Increased efforts are needed to strengthen coordination with other agencies responsible for the control of licit substances; control mechanisms should be reviewed to prevent falsifying prescriptions of controlled substances, diversion from wholesalers and operation of illicit pharmacies. The Government of the Dominican Republic should consider taking all steps necessary to strengthen its prosecution capability; free trade zones, the strong gambling sector and government promotion of foreign investment in construction and tourist industries make DR attractive to money launderers. It has been noted that drug traffickers have been taking advantage of the unstable political situation in Haiti by routing drugs through that country and the Dominican Republic to the US.

The Government of Belize is commended for adopting a national drug control strategy (that covers all areas), the steps taken toward monitoring the trade in and movement of psychotropic substances, (including the creation of an Inspectorate), and the drafting of related legislation. Other commendations include Belize’s accession to the 1961 and 1971 Conventions in December.

The Government of Guyana is encouraged to accede to the 1961 Convention without delay. The report further calls upon all States and territories to submit required reports and data on time to the INCB.
ATTORNEY GENERALS AGREE TO PUSH FOR TRANSNATIONAL CRIME CONVENTION

At the ODCCP Ministerial Consultation on the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols held in Port of Spain 30 November to 1 December 2001, the Attorney Generals of the Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago, pledged to push for their early ratification and implementation in national legislation. The laws of each country were reviewed in respect of the criminalization of participation in an organized criminal group, the laundering of proceeds of crime, corruption, obstruction of justice, as well as the measures available to prosecute organized crime, confiscation and seizure of assets, protection of witnesses, extradition, mutual legal assistance and cooperation with other law enforcement authorities. Most countries found that their present legislation put them in substantial compliance with the requirements of the UN Convention. The Director of Public Prosecutions of Barbados, Mr. Charles Leacock, presented a draft Bill on Organized Crime. This was reviewed by the group and it was felt that a modified version might be useful as a model draft for other countries.

At the recent OAS Meeting of the Ministers of Justice, the Caribbean Attorneys General agreed to stay in touch regarding organized crime and anti-terrorism domestic legislation, and seek to develop model laws through the CARICOM Legal Affairs Committee.

BELIZE AND ST VINCENT ACCEDIE TO NARCOTIC DRUGS CONVENTIONS

In December 2001, Belize and St Vincent and the Grenadines acceded to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. The importance of acceding to the Conventions are twofold. According to Belize authorities, it has led to extensive reform of Belize’s drug laws and has enhanced the capacity of the law enforcement agencies in the fight against illegal drugs.

JAMAICA LAUNCHES YOUTH DRUG ABUSE REDUCTION PROGRAMME

In November 2000 the Jamaican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade announced that approximately 600 young persons in two urban communities are to benefit from a programme to reduce their vulnerability to substance abuse. Under the Youth at Risk/Drug Abuse Reduction Programme for Jamaica approximately $200,000 will be spent on skills training, improving literacy among the youngsters, and building the capacity of agencies serving youth. Hon. K.D. Knight, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and Mr. Michael Platzer, United Nations Drug Control Representative signed the agreement at the ministry in Kingston. Clients of social service providers (Children First in St Catherine and VIP Youth in Kingston) will benefit directly from the programme.

The programme will be implemented in Tawes Pen in St. Catherine and Maxfield Park in Kingston. These two communities have been selected because of the high levels of unemployment, low levels of skill, high concentration of young people who are out of school, illiterate, unemployed and unskilled as well as their location in high crime areas with significant illegal transactions and activities in drug use. Phase one of the project will commence in early 2002, while phase two will be completed in 2003. In the first six months, activities will focus on the establishment of the UN Youth at Risk/Drug Abuse theme group and a comprehensive situation analysis on the challenges and needs of youth at risk in the selected communities. In addition, project activities will build skills to develop the capacity of parents to respond to community needs, and to strengthen the capacity of specialist teachers and counselors in assessment, analysis counseling and risk management in the selected communities.

For more information about the programme, please contact Ms. Anneke Rousseau, Public Relations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade, 21 Dominica Drive, Kingston 5, Jamaica, Tel: (876) 926-4220-8/(876) 926-4416-9, fax: (876) 926-7390, E-mail: informaj@cwjamaica.com
**FOCUS PROFILE:**

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR COMMISSIONER FOR CANADA TO BARBADOS & THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

H.E SANDELLIE SCRIMSHAW

On 12 February the Editor of *Focus On Drugs* met with Her Excellency Sandelle Scrimshaw at the Canadian High Commission in Bridgetown. The purpose of the interview was to acquaint *Focus*’ readership with the High Commissioner and to discuss Canada’s recent contribution to the fight against drug trafficking in the Caribbean.

The following is the transcript from that meeting.

Q. How long have you been working in the Caribbean?

**High Commissioner Scrimshaw:** I’ve been here for a year and a half now. This is my first professional experience in the Caribbean. As many Canadians do, I discovered this region first as a tourist, and then in September of 2000 I came to Barbados as the High Commissioner for Canada to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. Most of my professional experience, both within CIDA and Foreign Affairs – and during a secondment I had with the African Development Bank as Canadian Executive Director – focused on Africa. I was also briefly the Director General for Asia in the Department of Foreign Affairs. This is, however, my first experience living and working in the Caribbean.

Q. Recognizing that most of the drugs that enter Canada are trans-shipped through the Caribbean, who are Canada’s partners in the effort to combat illicit drug trafficking?

**High Commissioner Scrimshaw:** Canada has many partners in dealing with the issue of illicit drugs. Our partners first and foremost in this region are the Caribbean nations themselves who are deeply concerned about the impact that the trafficking and the consumption of drugs is having on their economies, and on the stability and security in the region. But of course we also work with multilateral organizations, which have as part of their mandate to address this trans-border issue that affects all of us in such a difficult and serious way. And we work with donor countries as well who are providing funds to support the international effort.

I can give you one example of a particular relationship that we have and that is the Canada-EU relationship in the area of the fight against drugs. We have a similar approach to these issues, and hence it is conducive for us to establish a partnership in this field. We work closely with the Member States at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in order to develop multilateral response to the problem, and with those EU States that are members of the major donor group giving direction to the UNDCP. Canada is also deeply committed to cooperation within the Dublin Group, and as a matter of fact we chaired that Group until the end of 2001.

We are a strong supporter of the work of Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the OAS. As you know, the work that UNDCP does is guided by the principles set out in the June 1998 UN General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem, and basically it established two principles. The first is that the problem of illicit drugs and its solution are a responsibility which we all share whether they are countries that produce the drugs, countries that consume them, or whether we’re simply countries where drugs transit through our borders. The second principle is that we need to have a balanced approach in addressing the demand for illicit drugs, as well as the problem supply. It is only by tackling this issue from both sides of the equation that we will have a reasonable chance of success in reducing the scope of the problem, and ultimately eradicating it.

Conscious of these principles and very supportive of them, if you look at Canada’s financial contribution in this area, what we try to do is allocate it equally between programs that address the supply of illicit drugs and those that deal with demand. I
mentioned earlier that the Dublin Group, as you know is an informal group of countries providing assistance in drug control. Now the main group meets twice a year in Brussels, however, much of the work is done by mini-Dublin Groups in countries that are affected by or concerned with the drug issue. We have a mini-Dublin Group in Bridgetown, and the High Commission has participated actively in that group. It’s an opportunity for us to share information with our colleagues in other missions and agencies to better coordinate our efforts, so we’re creating synergies of supporting systems directed towards a common purpose. This is a particular forum that still has great value. Still in relation to this region, in 1996 the Caribbean governments, with Canada, the US and the EU states, endorsed the Barbados Plan of Action, which is an anti-drug strategy coordinated by UNDCP. So that’s another channel that we use in the collective fight against drug trafficking and substance abuse.

Q. Has the Canadian government given any indication that these efforts at the Regional level have been successful?

High Commissioner Scrimshaw: There are indications that we’re making some inroads. Canadian assistance has been – in addition to information sharing and cooperation with a variety of agencies – targeted in certain areas. And in those specific areas, yes, I think we’re seeing some signs of impact and some signs of success. We recognize that this is a large problem and one that could be used to endanger the security and stability of our states, and as well as our economic prosperity, so that more work is needed.

Q. What are the future prospects of Canadian cooperation in combating drugs and crime in the Caribbean?

High Commissioner Scrimshaw: We’ve developed over the last few years a comprehensive assistance program, where we’re trying to work through bilateral and multilateral channels to address the drug problem and related crimes that plague this region. We certainly have supported the Caribbean Coordination Mechanism, and through UNDCP a programme to strengthen the judicial system in the Dominican Republic. We’ve also supported over the last few years, the UNDCP’s Global Programme on Money Laundering, which is very active in this region. We’ve supported the development of customs systems through the Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement Council. And we are also providing training in addiction treatment. A number of agencies, departments and organizations in Canada play key roles in these areas and work closely with their counterparts in the region.

The RCMP has a very valuable program of cooperation with Caribbean Police Commissioners and other agencies that are collectively working to stem the flow of drugs through the region and their entry into Canada. They also work in areas of money laundering and other white-collar crime, because we often find that where you have a significant quantity of illicit drugs you also see a serious incidence of crime. Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, and the Department of Justice are also actively engaged in this region.

CIDA, the Canadian International Development Agency, has been involved in a program to strengthen legal and judicial systems in the Eastern Caribbean. We’re working at the magistrates level, trying to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the courts in dealing with criminal activity. And most recently, during the visits of the Solicitor General of Canada and the Commissioner of Correctional Service of Canada, we signed a letter of intent to cooperate in corrections support with Barbados in developing correctional services to make sure that service is as professional as possible.

Our approach is to have a strategy, and then to focus that strategy on areas where we feel that we can really make a difference. Where do we go from here? There are some very positive developments in the region. I have been struck over the last year and a half by the increasing awareness and engagement against drugs and crime. Certainly heightened by the events of September 11th, where we realize that none of us are immune to crime. But I also think that within the OAS, the Summit of the American process, that there has been a sharper focus than ever before on the need for an intra-American security strategy. Clearly, when you look at the threats to this region, illicit drugs and related crime are key elements of those things. The region has begun to put in place the mechanisms and the institutions, which will strengthen our collective capacity to do something and ultimately reduce the incidence of illicit drugs, and also through education, reduce the demand for drugs in the region.

The fact that there is now a National Joint Headquarters being established here in Barbados is a very positive development. You’ll have all of the agencies working together; a collective body that will ensure the security of the border and who can share information on a regular basis, as well as coordinate their interdiction efforts. We can then go to one body, and channel assistance with them, providing targeted assistance where there may be a need or requirement. Canada is also a strong supporter of the Regional Security System, which has been a major asset to interdiction. Another example is the Regional Clearance System with small craft registration. These are all encouraging developments. And certainly we are committed to strong cooperation in this area, and we’re doing so in a way that complements what others are doing in partnership, both with local governments and with other organizations.

William Mbaho
In November 2001, the First Regional Workshop on Capacity Building was held by UNDCP and CAREC/PAHO/WHO in Barbados. Representatives from 17 Caribbean countries participated in the workshop which is part of a series of training modules to be conducted during 2001-02 under the umbrella of the Drug Abuse Epidemiological and Surveillance System Project implemented by the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC).

The main objectives of the workshop were to exchange information and learn about National School Surveys, the development of national networks for data collection on drug use and abuse and Rapid Assessment Surveys.

The workshop’s aim was to sensitize National Coordinating Units, the national focal points for the Caribbean Drug Information Network (CARIDIN), to the need for national data collection efforts. Participants not only spoke about data gathering, but also discussed how information on drug use can be translated into action. As an initial activity towards the development of national drug information systems, countries will organize national network meetings with key agencies involved in drug use and abuse, as well as produce national reports on the drug use situation in their countries. A day was dedicated to the planning and implementation of National School Surveys. At least 10 countries were targeted for implementing school surveys in 2002. The remaining seven countries will conduct school surveys during the later part of 2002 or in early 2003. It will be the first time a standardized instrument developed by OAS/CICAD will be used throughout the countries. This unique effort will enable countries to compare their results throughout the region. Aside from focusing on the planning of school surveys, countries also shared experiences from past school surveys conducted in the region.

Another workshop activity was the implementation of Rapid Assessment Surveys, as well as lessons learned from past Rapid Assessment Surveys. In addition, participants familiarized themselves with the basic principles of qualitative techniques used in Rapid Assessment Surveys, and how qualitative and quantitative information can complement each other.

In January 2002 a two-day workshop on immediate treatment intervention and data reporting was held in St Vincent and the Grenadines by UNDCP in collaboration with Marion House, (an outpatient drug treatment facility in the capital, Kingstown). The workshop, supported by the UNDCP Global Assessment Programme (GAP), introduced the participants to diagnosis, brief intervention strategies and treatment options for alcohol, crack and marijuana users. Participants also discussed the purpose of data collection on drug use and abuse with particular emphasis on the identification of resources and needs to enhance data collection efforts.

Participants came from a wide range of the country’s institutions linked to drug use and/or abuse: psychiatry, an outpatient treatment facility (Marion House), prison, police and family services. A total of 18 nurses, social workers, police and prison officers and counsellors attended. Hon. Douglas Slater, Ministry of Health and Mr. Michael Platzer, UNDCP Regional Representative, opened the workshop. The Minister emphasised that use of illicit and licit drugs are of “great concern” for the country and that greater awareness is needed.

The workshops included lectures on diagnosis, brief intervention, crack, alcohol and marijuana; and were accompanied with role plays, exercises and case discussions. Resource persons were UNDCP Regional Epidemiology Adviser, Jennifer Hillebrad, Dr. Ermine Belle, Director of Psychiatry in Barbados and Dr. Eugenia Combie, Consultant Psychiatrist in St Vincent.

As well as learning about treatment interventions and diagnosis of substance dependence and misuse, participants were introduced to standardized treatment reporting. In many countries, basic data, such as the number of admissions, socio-demographic characteristics, types of drugs used and frequency, is not extracted from individual client files and analysed on a regular basis. However, this data is important for monitoring drug trends, allocating funds and informing the public. How to combine client assessment and the collection of standardized core indicators from all clients was one of the issues discussed at the workshop.

The event strengthened capacity building, and served as a forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience among countries in the Caribbean.

Jennifer Hillebrad
The Global Assessment Programme (GAP) was formulated in 1998 by the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Drugs. Member States of the UN agreed during this session to eliminate or significantly reduce the supply and demand for illicit drugs by the year 2008. It was recognized that in order to pursue this goal, reliable and systematic data to monitor and evaluate the progress was needed.

For this reason, the UN General Assembly requested UNDCP to provide Member States with the assistance necessary to compile reliable and internationally comparable data. Furthermore, UNDCP was asked to collect, summarise and analyse these data and report to the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs the global trends in drug production and abuse.

**RELIABLE DATA**

In responding to this request, UNDCP has developed GAP. The main objective of GAP is to develop and establish one global, and nine regional systems, to collect reliable and internationally comparable drug abuse data and assess the magnitude and patterns of drug abuse at country, regional and global levels.

Within the Caribbean Region GAP supports the Caribbean Drug Information Network (CARIDIN), promotes the collection of data on drug abuse and use in the region, gives technical assistance to countries undertaking surveys and audits existing resources for data collection. The latter refers to information, resource and needs analyses (INRAs) that will be carried out in several countries in the Caribbean. An INRA involves an audit of individuals and organisations, existing networks and data collection exercises operating in a given country.

The analysis then identifies barriers and needs for the development of data collection strategies, for instance, treatment reporting systems.

**CURACAO**

The first INRA in the Caribbean Region was conducted in Curacao. UNDCP in collaboration with the Fundashon Maneho Adikshon (FMA) audited 10 institutions in Curacao. Among these institutions were treatment facilities, the prison and the psychiatric hospital. In a collaborative effort, UNDCP, FMA and the institutions visited discussed the type of data collected, means of data collection, resources available to improve existing infrastructure for data collection as well as needs for the improvement of such efforts.

Crack-cocaine and marijuana are the main illicit drugs abused according to the information available in Curacao. Although no prevalence or incidence estimates for illicit drugs exist, evidence from institutions concerned with psychoactive substance use report that crack is widely used in Curacao. The Fundashon Maneho Adikshon is the key institution involved in data collection and in the promotion of such efforts. It operates a computerized data management system to gather client information throughout their treatment process.

**STANDARDIZATION**

The main needs identified in Curacao include training in computerized data collection systems and analysis of data. Apart from the inadequate computer software, some institutions are also lacking hardware. There is also a need for standardization of existing information for institutions already engaging in data collection efforts.

It is envisaged that the INRA report for Curacao will also serve to stimulate discussions among relevant institutions in Curacao that may eventually become members of an island data information system.

Jennifer Hillebrand
The Caribbean is one of the regions in the world with the most severe HIV/AIDS epidemic outside of sub-Saharan Africa. According to UNAIDS estimates, between 360,000 and 500,000 people in the region are infected with the disease. The rates continue to increase especially among the young adult population. People between the ages of 15 and 44 represent 70% of the AIDS cases, half of which are in the 25-34 age group. The Caribbean Task Force on HIV/AIDS warns: “Given that more than half of the Caribbean population is under the age of 24, these implications hold great significance for the social, economic and political futures of this sub-region”.

“Substance abuse and HIV/AIDS” is this year’s theme for the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. There is increasing evidence that drug use plays a major role in the spread of HIV/AIDS. The links between drug use and HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean have not been conclusively documented. The behavioural dynamics that fuel the epidemic are more likely to be linked to sexual lifestyles.

HIV/AIDS appears to be associated with high-risk sexual behaviours, such as early initiation of sexual activity, multiple sex partners and unprotected sex. Drug use may also be linked to unprotected sexual behaviours that lead to HIV infection. Lack of inhibition associated with drugs may result in unprotected sex (intercourse without a condom) and intoxication can compromise condom use or the ability to negotiate safe sex. Studies in other countries have shown different rates of condom use with different drugs.

Because of the social conditions present in many Caribbean countries, young girls are seen as an important group vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection through sexual relations with men. Young girls may be pressured by their peers to have sex early on, and find themselves exposed to coercive sex, rape, incest, domestic violence, and predatory “sugar daddies”.

Drug use may not only be a factor contributing to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, but can also be considered as a consequence following the infection. People living with HIV/AIDS may turn to drugs or alcohol as a means of coping with the retrovirus. Furthermore, due to the excessive cost and inaccessibility of treatment including the antiretroviral drugs, people living with HIV/AIDS may turn to self-medication with illicit drugs. Another link between drugs use and the HIV infection is the social stigma attached to both problems.

The stigma often results in the marginalisation and discrimination of both drugs users and people living with HIV/AIDS. The stigmatisation from their communities can cause drug users to maintain their habits, and may prevent people living with HIV/AIDS from disclosing their HIV status.

Poverty is also a major factor in increasing the risk of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. There is a direct link between poverty and survival. Poverty may lead to dangerous behaviours (i.e. drug use, prostitution and violence) as a survival strategy. The combination of these factors creates a context for vulnerability to the epidemic.

Although the links between drug use and HIV infection are acknowledged, they remain underdeveloped in research, prevention programmes, government policy and national drug strategies. Agencies working in HIV/AIDS and with drug abuse need to increase their collaboration in order to prevent drug use and the spread of HIV/AIDS. UNDCP is in the process of developing a project in Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada, which would further analyse the relationship between drug use and HIV/AIDS. It will also emphasize the creation of partnerships and cooperation among agencies working in these fields and the empowerment of youth through the formulation and execution of youth-related programmes. By preventing drug use we are also preventing the risk of HIV infection related to drug abuse.

For more information, please contact Marisa Canuto, Youth Programme Development Adviser, at the UNDCP Caribbean Office. E-mail: marisa.canuto@undcpcb.org

Marisa Canuto
DEMAND REDUCTION STUDY COMPLETED IN HAITI

As part of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) Demand Reduction Project in the Republic of Haiti, a study sponsored by the Haitian Government, was undertaken to determine the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of students and street youth towards drug use and drug prevention practices. The survey was conducted by the Haitian Children’s Institute (IHE) and the Association for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (APAAC), under the supervision of the Magloire Working Group.

The survey was carried out in the metropolitan region of Port-au-Prince in Haiti from June to October 2000. The sample included 4,317 secondary students between the ages of 15 and 19, and 778 street children over the age of 10. The study reports high level of awareness about drugs, their effects and consequences, especially among street children. Most students surveyed recognize marijuana, cocaine/crack, alcohol and cigarettes as drugs. However, this group did not identify abuse of medication as being harmful. Neither did street children recognize that alcohol and cigarettes are drugs.

Alcohol is the drug most consumed among school youth, followed by amphetamines, barbiturates, tranquillisers and cigarettes. Alcohol is also the drug utilised by most street children. Cigarettes, tranquillisers and inhalants are also common among this group. Access to cigarettes, alcohol, sleeping pills, inhalants and tranquilisers is easy for both school and street children. Illicit drugs, such as marijuana, cocaine -- and especially heroin and LSD -- are harder to come by.

The initiation age to drugs is relatively low as seen among street children who mentioned using drugs before the age of 11. More than 50% of school children reported having tried drugs before the age of 16. Furthermore, at least one third of the girls in school reported experimenting with marijuana before the age of 11. Furthermore, girls seem to use more tranquillisers and sleeping pills than boys. In fact, the presence of poly drug use among girls is revealed. Among school students surveyed, a pre-addictive and addictive tendency is noticed among marijuana and cocaine users who consume at least twice or three times a week. The presence of a pre-addictive and addictive behaviour in street children is revealed for the use of inhalants, marijuana and cigarettes.

Regarding prevention strategies, both students and street children agreed that the best sources of counselling for drug prevention are persons working with drug users and parents. Television and radio are perceived as the best means of sending drug prevention messages. The series of recommendations relate to the implementation or the reestablishment of prevention, education and counselling programmes. A comprehensive approach is suggested to combat the drug problem among youth. The data presented in the study is of great importance for researchers, social workers and other practitioners in this field. To receive a copy of this study, please contact the UNDCP Caribbean Office.

ANTIGUAN 2001 NATIONAL DRUG USE PREVALENCE SURVEY

The results of an extensive school and workplace survey sampling 1047 students in 23 schools and 622 adults in Antigua and Barbuda interestingly mirrored the findings of a 1991 student survey and a 1992 workplace survey. In both studies, nearly 20% of respondents reported that they have experimented with drugs (marijuana). Most of the respondents obtained their first supply from friends or relatives (87.5% in 2001 versus 83.4% in 1992). Of the 222 students (13%) who reported drug use sometime in their teenage lives, 25.2% reported experimenting at the age of 12. According to the survey, commissioned by the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Public Safety, first time experimenters do not necessarily become drug users, only 67% or 30.2% of those reporting still use drugs. More reassuring was that only 16.7% reported that there was a drug problem at school and more than 80% said there was no evidence of drugs being sold at school. 62% do not believe that drugs should be legalized. Most interesting were the reasons why students have never tried drugs (worried about effects on health, school programme influenced me, just not interested). However, 20% said they would deliver or sell drugs if offered money. The students also provided specific suggestions for dealing with the problem of drug abuse.

Similarly, drug abuse was not seen as a serious problem at work (only 1% reported evidence of drug abuse within the workplace). 86% of the adults did not want illicit drugs legalized. 36% of the employees felt that most problems currently associated with youths in society were as a result of drug abuse but 31.8% did not agree. Over 60% of the workers thought there was a strong relationship between drugs and crime. 55concrete recommendations, covering the role of parents, community mobilization, public awareness, strengthening the agencies dealing with drug demand reduction, and the need to conduct a Prison Drug Use Prevalence Survey are contained in the final chapter.

The Survey, financed by the OAS, was prepared by Dr. Clarence Henry and Associates E-mail www.drchenry@yahoo.com
CARIBBEAN TASK FORCE ON CRIME AND SECURITY SUBMITS INTERIM REPORT

Although the Task Force, established by the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community last July, was unable to deliver a final report it made specific recommendations pertaining to nine issues it examined closely. The main recommendations related to the establishment of National Crime Commissions, Maritime Cooperation, the establishment of a Joint Caribbean Office in the USA to handle deportation issues, and the creation of a Regional Intelligence Unit.

The Task Force had three meetings with representatives from 11 Member States (six countries attended all the meetings), which included Police Commissioners, criminologists, and regional organizations. Over thirty papers on the situation in various countries and on specific themes were presented and discussed.

Although many of the Police Commissioners reported a decline in crime rates, it was felt that there was growing incivility and lawlessness throughout the region, contributing to a culture of non-conformity and disrespect. The intensity of violent crime against the person, the increasing use of firearms and the links between illicit arms, drugs and violent crime were the main sources for public fear. According to regional data available, hard core of recidivist perpetrats 60% of the serious crime. Inequity, increasing unemployment, lack of opportunities, the “underperformance” of males in the school system, and tolerance of lawlessness create conditions for the persistence of crime and violence. It was recommended that multi-sectoral, integrated National Crime Master Plans be developed with an emphasis on crime prevention, effective law enforcement, community policing, prison improvements, justice reform and alternatives to incarceration. Better statistics are needed; a Regional Crime Research and Policy Unit has been proposed; legislation needs updating; and the police structures need to be reformed.

The Task Force considered that practical action had to be undertaken to stop the flow of firearms. They endorsed the UN Protocol on the Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, strengthening the Region’s capacity to monitor arms trade, introducing more rigid controls over domestic sales of ammunition, and tracking of firearms. They suggested that the ACCP be charged with developing information arrangements and stricter control systems with source countries, collate statistics on firearms-related offences in the region and keep abreast of trends.

With regard to deportees, the Task Force recommended the establishment of a joint Caribbean office in Washington to handle deportation issues (operational and procedural), the development of resettlement/rehabilitation programmes and the regional exchange of information on deportees.

CARIBBEAN HUMAN RIGHTS SYMPOSIUM HELD IN CAYMAN

Distinguished jurists from across the Caribbean and around the World were brought together by Chief Justice Anthony Smellie to discuss the state of human rights in the region, from 11-14 September 2001 in Grand Cayman.

Ms. Gillian Lindsay Nanton, United Nations Resident Coordinator, referred to the reports of police abuse and extra-judicial killings in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, the disregard with which street people are treated, the lack of access to effective justice systems, the deplorable prison conditions, and the violation of children’s rights.

Violence against women, sexual abuse of children and the trafficking of women were the concerns of Justice Desiree Bernard, Chancellor of the Judiciary of Guyana. Sir Dennis Byron, Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, examined the “The Right to Life v. the Death Penalty: Some Human Rights Considerations” in his paper. Edward Fitzgerald, Q.C., reviewed the recent developments in death penalty litigation in the Caribbean. The constitutionality of confiscation orders was reviewed by the Cayman Solicitor General Samuel Bulgin, and Attorney General David Ballantyne, in the context of the 1988 Drug Convention, balancing public interest (reversal of burden of proof) and individual rights (the presumption of innocence-right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions). Ian Paget-Brown undertook a comparative study of laws protecting financial privacy. Vaughan Carter of the Cayman Islands Law School observed in his paper that Caribbean jurisprudence is being influenced by the European Convention of Human Rights but argues that a Bill of Rights is still necessary. The Constitutional Review in the Cayman has recommended a Bill of Rights. Susan Dickson, Legal Advisor for Overseas Territories endorsed inclusion of a human rights chapter in the constitutions of the UK territories. Detention, Police Powers and Interrogation: both the Solicitor General and the Attorney General reviewed Rights of Persons in Custody and the Right to a Fair Trial. Sara Collins-Francis, Attorney at Law in Grand Cayman stressed the important role of NGOs in protecting the Rights of Women and Children and described the success story of the Legal Befrienders. Kenneth Dill spoke of the Bermuda Experience with a Human Rights Commission .The Hon. Mr. Justice Schofield reported that Caribbean countries tend to shy away from making the provision of legal aid a constitutional requirement. Only Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, and Jamaica have ratified the American Convention on Human Rights. One of the most interesting papers was by Professor Rex Nettleford who underlined the importance of freedom of expression in the Caribbean.

The papers as well as the resolutions are available on the web site www.humanrightstoday.ky

Michael Platzer
A workshop to prepare Grenada’s Third National Master Plan on Drug Control, 2003 to 2007, took place from 25 to 28 February 2002, in St. George’s.

Prime Minister Keith Mitchell stated in his opening remarks that, “the anti-drug campaign is one for both the public and private sector. It is not simply an undertaking solely for the Police or the National Council On Drug Abuse. The media, churches, school, community-based organizations, political parties, all have a definitive role in this matter. The success or failure of our national drug control strategy will impact on all our lives, our children, and our children’s children.”

Among those attending the workshop were: Senator Raymond Anthony, Attorney General and Chairman of the Grenada Council on Drug Control (NCODC); Canon Leopold Friday, Chairman of the Conferences of Churches, Grenada; Mr. Francis Mc. Barnette, Director of the Organization of American States (OAS) Office; Grenadian Ministers of Government and their respective Permanent Secretaries; and Mr. Dave Alexander, Grenada’s Drug Avoidance Officer.

A multi-sectoral working group was established at the conclusion of the workshop to review information compiled during the workshop. A National Liaison Officer will spearhead this activity, which will culminate in the production of Grenada’s third National Master Plan on Drug Control, 2003 to 2007.

The facilitators of the workshop were Mr. Miguel Escudero and Mrs. Ruth Villagram of the Organization of American States/Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (OAS/CICAD). The Government of Grenada and the Organization of American States/Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (OAS/CICAD) funded the workshop.

The National Drug Council (NDC) in Grand Cayman has embarked on a major fundraising drive to improve community support for many of its programmes. “We run programmes and activities throughout the year” says National Drugs Coordinator Ms. Cathy Chestnut, “and with the tight funding situation many of them may not make the cut this year or may have to be drastically altered”.

For more information please call the NDC at 949-9000, e-mail: ndccayman@candw.ky or mail P.O. Box 10007 APO.
The Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) Secretariat announced last October that it considers the fight against terrorism among its causes and its Members stand committed to continue their efforts to prevent the unlawful use of the financial systems in the region for the movement of funds by terrorists, their associates, as well as the use of such funds to finance their activities. The CFATF Council of Ministers also urged all CFATF Members to implement all the United Nations Security Council’s Resolutions on terrorism and terrorist financing and to sign and ratify all the United Nations Conventions against terrorism and, in particular, the Convention on the Suppression of Terrorist Financing.

The CFATF has continued to promote international cooperation between law enforcement and regulatory authorities in the fight against the abuse of regional financial systems, the strengthening of national legal and regulatory frameworks to effectively combat money laundering, and the observance of international standards, specially those related to (i) cross-border cooperation and information sharing, (ii) supervisory powers and practices and (iii) customer due diligence.

The CFATF urges those Caribbean Basin countries that are not yet among its Members, to join the organization so as to play a part in the international fight against money laundering and terrorist financing.

The CFATF applauds the developments in Antigua and Barbuda and the Bahamas, where Executive Orders to facilitate the freezing of assets of known terrorists and their associates have been issued. In both countries banking records were examined to determine whether any accounts belong to any individual or organization included in the list provided by the Government of the United States of America. No accounts in the names of such individuals or organizations were found in either country. Also worth noting is the fact that new antiterrorism legislation is being considered by the Parliaments of the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago.

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The CFATF urges those Caribbean Basin countries that are not yet among its Members, to join the organization so as to play a part in the international fight against money laundering and terrorist financing.

The CFATF applauds the developments in Antigua and Barbuda and the Bahamas, where Executive Orders to facilitate the freezing of assets of known terrorists and their associates have been issued. In both countries banking records were examined to determine whether any accounts belong to any individual or organization included in the list provided by the Government of the United States of America. No accounts in the names of such individuals or organizations were found in either country. Also worth noting is the fact that new antiterrorism legislation is being considered by the Parliaments of the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago.

On 5 December, the four-year UNDCP/EC Drug Abuse Demand Reduction project was closed in an official ceremony at UN House in Port of Spain. The Chairman, and many participants from the High Level Meeting on Drugs and Crime attended the event. After a brief welcome address by the UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Hans Geiser, Dr. Michael Platzer described the many achievements of the project. He presented Mrs. Margaret Ferray of the Ministry of Community Empowerment with copies of The Final Report On the Parent Survey, The 2000 Rapid Assessment Survey, The Substance Abuse Curriculum for Schools and The Evaluation Report. The Representative of the Delegation of the European Commission in Trinidad and Tobago spoke of “the effective cooperation” between the main partners, the UNDP/UNDCP, the EC and the National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADAPP). He listed successful outputs of the project:

1. The establishment of an effective demand reduction programme in 5 selected communities
2. A school prevention programme
3. The improvement of treatment and rehabilitation services
4. Enhanced research capabilities

The EC Representative joined Mr. Platzer in congratulating all those who contributed to its success, particularly the project manager, Mr. Alex Riley, the NDAPP team and all the people on the ground who were involved in the different community, school prevention and training programmes.

“The fight against drugs is an enormous challenge and far from being won. However, we hope that, besides its physical achievements, the programme, in its own modest way, contributed to the public awareness and to the sensitization of decision makers in Trinidad and Tobago to continue with similar activities on a wider scale.”

(The Representative of the Delegation of the European Commission in Trinidad and Tobago)
**OASRELEASESREPORTON IMPLEMENTING ANTI–DRUG RECOMMENDATIONS**

In January 2002, the OAS Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission released its first report on progress made in carrying out anti-drug recommendations from the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM). It concludes that the countries of the Americas have made “a significant effort” to take steps recommended in the first round of the evaluation process, but in some cases they have encountered obstacles due to lack of technical and financial resources.

“This progress report represents one more step in our cooperative efforts to confront the scourge of illegal drugs, which has had such high social, economic and human costs in our region,” OAS Secretary General César Gaviria said. “Over time, this evaluation and assessment process will strengthen our national and collective measures against drugs.”

The report includes a hemispheric overview and a country-by-country assessment based on some 400 recommendations made a year ago in the first evaluation round. The hemispheric overview shows progress in a number of areas, including the development of national anti-drug plans; the ability of countries to measure land under illicit cultivation; and the adoption of measures against money laundering.

Several countries have also signed treaties to combat corruption and firearms trafficking, and international cooperation against drugs has improved, according to the report. Among the deficiencies noted was the difficulty most countries have in collecting statistics on various aspects of the drug problem.

The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (known by its Spanish acronym, CICAD), representing 34 countries of the Americas, put the MEM into operation in 1999. The creation of an objective, governmental evaluation mechanism to improve cooperation and coordination on the drug issue was required by the Second Summit of the Americas.

Under the MEM process, CICAD conducts full evaluations every other year, with progress reports issued in alternate years. In April, CICAD will begin compiling new data for a second round of full evaluations, based on MEM questionnaires that the countries are in the process of completing. It will issue the next complete evaluation reports, covering the years 2001-2002, in January 2003.

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**CICAD ON THE WEB**

The complete progress report is available on the Internet

[www.cicad.oas.org/MEM2001/Eng/Index.htm](http://www.cicad.oas.org/MEM2001/Eng/Index.htm)

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**BRIDGETOWN GROUP MEETS**

On 31 January 2002 the Bridgetown Group met at the Canadian High Commission, Bridgetown, to discuss recent developments and projects underway in the Caribbean. Present were: Mr. Michael Mayhew, (Deputy British High Commissioner), Ms. Gillian Metzgen and Ms. Sue Dickson (British High Commission); Mr. Wendell Goodin of the OAS; Dr. Michael Platzer, Mr. Flavio Mirella and Mr. William Mbaho from UNDCP; Mr. Brian Kelly representing the European Commission Delegation; Mr. Brett Mattei of the Embassy of the United States of America; Mr. Michael Kaduck and Mr. Al Hardy from the Canadian High Commission. Mr. David Byrom from PMO Training was the Guest speaker.

Mr. Kaduck reported that in December 2001, Canada imposed a visa restriction on visitors from Grenada and Dominica, because of security threats posed by the sale of passports through their economic citizenship programmes.

Mr. Hardy announced that Canada’s Department for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, in cooperation with the Department of National Defence, is sponsoring a hemispheric peacekeeping training project, which will fund the participation by 160 candidates from throughout the hemisphere on peacekeeping training courses in Canada.

Mr. Goodin, Director of the OAS office, circulated a document regarding the recommendations of the OAS Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), flowing from the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM).

Ms. Metzgen outlined recent development in UK support to security sector reform, beginning with correctional services. It is anticipated that the UK-Caribbean Forum planned for Guyana in April may give rise to additional UK support for prison and police training.

Mr. Mattei noted the USA’s commitment of USD 2.3 Million this year to fund the C-26 maritime surveillance aircraft programme of the Regional Security System.

Mr. Kelly discussed the planned dissolution of ECDCO in April. Funding will not be renewed principally due to a drastic reduction in the relevant EC budget line, such that only 1.6 million Euros will be available for counter-narcotics assistance worldwide.

Mr. Byrom, Regional Law Enforcement Training Strategy Advisor, announced that PMO training will be organizing courses in Trinidad and Tobago, at REDTRAC and elsewhere, as well as assisting Cuba to deliver its own counter-narcotics training course. Mr. Byrom also outlined the goals of the workshop, February 19-20, 2002 in Barbados, to develop a regional training strategy which will encourage both joint training and common training a full range of relevant security institutions in the Caribbean, predicated on a complex appreciation of the nature of the threats to be addressed.

The next meeting of the Bridgetown Group will be held in April 2002 and will be hosted by UNDCP.
**PAHO LAUNCH OF CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS IN BARBADOS**

The Caribbean Program Coordination (CPC) Office mounted a backdrop of colour and music to create an atmosphere of “corporate celebrations” in its conference room and main lobby for the Caribbean launch of the organization’s Centennial on January 17, 2002. Although billed as a press conference, a cross-section of representatives of state, the diplomatic community, the University of the West Indies, non governmental organizations, school children, the media and members of staff crowded into the CPC conference room to share in what was described by the Caribbean Program Coordinator Mrs. Veta Brown as “a special moment in history”. The occasion was also used to launch the poster, essay, and print journalism contests.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Colonel Neville Edwards, lauded the work undertaken by PAHO in the region of the Americas generally and the Caribbean specifically. He affirmed that it had been PAHO’s growth and development over the years, which played a pivotal role in improving health conditions in small island states like Barbados. The statement further disclosed that the Ministry of Health proposed to stage a number of events throughout the year designed to highlight PAHO’s achievements and to raise public awareness of some of the issues and developments in health over the years.

The audience was treated to a selection of 12 public service messages produced by PAHO in commemoration of the anniversary interspersed at various points throughout the morning’s proceedings. The CPC disclosed that Barbados television station the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), in addition to several other national television stations in the nine Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) served by the CPC office, had agreed to televise the messages throughout the year.

A special feature of the launch was the guest appearance of one of Barbados’ noted soca artists Brian ‘Bumba’ Payne. He gave a stirring rendition ‘Drug Free Lives’ during which he had the audience singing and moving rhythmically as he gyrated while belting out his selection of health awareness music.

Following the CPC’s closing remarks the curtains came down on the morning’s proceedings to the now region-wide acclaimed celebratory soca anthem “High Mass: Give Praise Children” by another of the region’s performing giants, David Rudder.

Clare Forrester

**PAHO DIRECTOR VISITS BARBADOS**

The Director of the Pan American Health Organization, Dr. George Alleyne conducted a bustling three-day visit to Barbados February 17-19 during which he met with a range of officials from the public and corporate sectors, the diplomatic community, toured a community project and a newly constructed HIV/AIDS counselling and treatment unit of the Ministry of Health. Dr. Alleyne also held meetings and discussions with members of the PAHO staff in Barbados who reported on some of their achievements and challenges in undertaking the organization’s program of technical co-operation in the countries served by the Caribbean Program Coordination (CPC) Office.

During a courtesy call on the Minister of Health, Senator Jerome Walcott, the Director and the Minister signed a Memorandum of Understanding reflecting an Agreement for the country’s participation in the organization’s Regional Revolving Fund for Strategic Public Health.

The signing was followed by a round-table talk with senior officials at the Health Ministry and then a brief tour of the HIV/AIDS counseling and treatment unit due to be officially opened in April.

For more information about Dr. Alleyne’s visit to the Barbados visit the Caribbean Program Coordination (CPC) Office Website: www.pahocpc.org
CAMP 2002 IN ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

Since 1986, the National Youth Council (NYC) of St Vincent and the Grenadines has organised and hosted a series of national Camps. A number of entities such as other regional NYCs have participated under the auspices of through the Caribbean Federation of Youth, as well as international youth organisations from around the world.

The Council has inititated these activities to provide all interested young persons (affiliated and nonaffiliated alike) with an opportunity to acquire training and skills relevant to leadership, personal development and group capacity building.

The National Youth Council of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will utilise Camp 2002 to attract young persons (especially out-of-school youth). It will demonstrate realistic strategies utilizing sports and culture to assist in the war against drugs. The target group for participation in this activity and to whom the message would be channeled is young people between the ages of 13 and 35 and youth living in communities of high poverty and high occurrence of drug use.

POLICE SEMINAR

3 Jan: Police Seminar at UN House, featuring guest speaker and Principal Crown Counsel, Ms. Donna Babb, from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, congratulates officers on the thoroughness of their investigations.

CCC LAUNCHES DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION PROGRAMME KIT

The Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC), together with UNDCP, held the Barbados launch of the resource kit of its Drug Demand Reduction Programme (DDRP) on 2 February 2002. This was part of the Clergy Seminar in observance of Drug Awareness month, and held in the UN House Auditorium, Bridgetown. Speakers at the ceremony included Mr. Gerard Granado (General Secretary of the CCC), Mr. Michael Platzer, Pastor Victor Roach, Ms. Allison Bidaisee. Over seventy clergymen and women attended, representing more than fifty different religious organizations on the island. Kits were distributed to all those in attendance.

On 3 September 2001, the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) launched a Drug Demand Reduction Training Programme in Arima, Trinidad for church workers from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, St.Kitts and Nevis, St.Vincent, and Trinidad and Tobago. The theological reflection in the CCC kit challenges communities by stating, “Members of the neighbourhood all know the drug lord and the pushers, but do not act positively. It is none of their business. There is moral paralysis and spiritual decay in these communities.” Other activities in this campaign include drama skits to reach young people, pastoral counseling and the establishment of a network or database of anti-drug campaigners across the region.

Kits are available from the CCC’s Trinidad Programme Centre at P.O.Box 876, Port of Spain. Tel: 1 (868) 628-2026/28; Fax: 1 (868) 628-2031; E-mail: caconftt@trinidad.net

DECRIMINALIZE GANJA?

24 Jan: A Panel Discussion was held at the University of the West Indies with guest speaker, Dr. Webster Edwards, recommending decriminalizing marijuana to reduce judicial backlog with cases of minor possession.
SIR GARFIELD SOBERS
POSTER UNVEILED

A poster of the great West Indies cricketer, acknowledged as the greatest all-rounder the world has ever known, was unveiled in the arrivals hall of Grantley Adams International Airport, Barbados, in January 2002.

The unveiling of the poster, depicting Sir Garfield Sobers with a message, “Knock Drugs For Six” was attended by fellow Barbadian cricketing celebrities, UNDP Resident Coordinator Ms. Rosina Wiltshire, UNDCP Regional Representative, Mr. Michael Platzer, Deputy Australian High Commissioner Mr. Peter Grant, Airport Manager, Mr. Joseph Johnson, NCSA Programme Officer Ms. Paulavette Atkinson, Customs officials and members of the local media.

Marking the occasion, Sir Garfield said “Barbados has achieved so much without sportsmen using drugs, and I see no reason why sports people should turn to them now.” He added, “I have played cricket for the West Indies and I certainly cannot recall anyone cricket player who leaned towards using drugs.”

Mr. Michael Platzer congratulated Sir Garfield for his many achievements in his athletic career, adding, “Barbados is a world leader in sports tourism – a great concept that allows young athletes to travel and compete in friendly games here and abroad. I believe it is a good thing to share the anti-drugs message with them in journeys – as we want to keep Barbados drug-free.”

The Sir Garfield poster in the airport arrivals hall leaves arriving passengers in no doubt about the stance of Barbados when it comes to drugs.