Developing a regional partnership in Central and the Caribbean in an effort to combat illicit drug trafficking and transnational organized crime

Phase I - March 2010 –February 2013

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(DRAFT)
I. Executive Summary

The *Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Partnership and Monitoring Mechanism* (the SDP/MM) is a technical assistance inter-regional programme with the objective of facilitating periodical consultations and strategic partnerships at the expert and policy levels in order to more effectively identify and implement coordinated responses to illicit trafficking and transnational organized crime affecting the Caribbean and Central America. The SDP/MM is a tool that helps develop and reinforce regional and international partnerships, as well as foster increased information sharing/exchange, thus strengthening data collection and analytical capacities related to drug trafficking and serious transnational organized crime, including the illicit traffic of firearms and human beings, as well as money-laundering and corruption. It aims at providing efficient technical assistance to SDP/MM partner countries in order to facilitate their efforts in ratifying and implementing relevant provisions of existing international drug and crime conventions and universal instruments against terrorism. Additionally, it will promote UNODC technical assistance and specialized training programmes for law enforcement agencies and the judiciary on investigation and prosecution measures.

The SDP/MM will promote the coordination of technical assistance in the field of counter narcotics and the fight against transnational organized crime through the use of an internet-based automated donor assistance mechanism, more commonly known as ADAM. This concept was initially developed under the *Paris Pact Initiative* to assist countries in the Eurasian region. Despite continued operational success under the Paris Pact initiative, development of a similar tool under the SDP/MM will need to take the unique complexities of the Central American and Caribbean regions into account. In this regard, due attention will be paid to the fact that transit countries in the region are generally small developing states which have fallen victim to increasing levels of violence and an erosion of both Government and civil society institutions.

The SDP/MM will also function as a source of normative assistance through the provision of expert advice and training concerned with implementing existing international legal instruments pertaining to drugs and organized crime. Special attention will be given to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the three Conventions on drug control, as well as the 16 universal instruments against terrorism.

II. Background

Central America and the Caribbean lie at the geographical intersection between the world’s largest cocaine producers, namely the Andean countries and the Southern Cone, and the world’s largest drug consumers, namely the USA and Europe, yet the region lacks the capacity to adequately address the challenges that illicit drug transit present. Drug-related crimes, and the associated violence that this fuels in Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico, threaten public safety and security and are impeding economic, social and political development. Narco-trafficking directly threatens urban security as gang violence and gun-related crime are on the rise. Some neighbourhoods in the Central American and the Caribbean regions are comparable to combat zones. Parts of these two regions record the highest murder rates worldwide; kidnappings, robberies and violence, especially among youth, are part of everyday life. The region is trapped in a vicious circle of weak governance and law enforcement capacity, rising
corruption and rampant money-laundering; this enables drug trafficking and undermines rule of law and economic prosperity which inevitably further compounds the problem of criminal activity.

The growing West African narcotics trade is indicative of an increasing problem as narco-criminal activities are now crossing the Atlantic. West Africa is the latest victim being exploited by Latin American drug traffickers who are cashing in on a relatively strong euro combined with a growing demand for cocaine in Europe. In the past five years, the amount of cocaine transiting this vulnerable coastline has grown exponentially. Importantly, there are presently three major trafficking routes from South America to the United States and Europe: (1) a Pacific route towards the United States and Canada via Central America and Mexico; (2) a Caribbean route via the Caribbean islands towards the United States and Europe; and (3) a Caribbean route via West Africa to Europe.

Tackling the threat of narco-trafficking in Central America and the Caribbean is a shared responsibility. No country is immune from the problem as all are involved either as a source, transit, or destination countries. The transnational nature of the problem requires an integrated regional approach, as well as comprehensive regional cooperation through, for example, UNODC, the Merida Initiative, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Central American Integration System (SICA) and other regional information sharing mechanisms. Particularly since the Caribbean and Central American regions are generally considered to be heavily affected by the transit of illicit drug trafficking, solid partnerships with regional organizations that extend to both origin and destination countries are critical. The SDP/MM initiative will only be as strong as the will of its partners, and in this regard close cooperation with existing regional initiatives will be reinforced and strongly encouraged.

III. Legal Framework

During the Ministerial Conference on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Transnational Organized Crime, and Terrorism as Challenges for Security and Development in the Caribbean, held 17-20 February 2009 in Santo Domingo, a Political Declaration (which inter alia also endorses the Plan of Action for the Caribbean) was signed by the Caribbean Member States for joint action to combat drug trafficking and related organized crime, setting the legal basis for the Santo Domingo Partnership and Monitoring Mechanism.

A similar Political Declaration and Regional Programme were approved at the Ministerial Conference on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Transnational Organized Crime, and Terrorism as Challenges for Security and Development in Central America, held 23-24 June 2009 in Managua, Nicaragua.

These two Political Declarations clearly reflect the full commitment of the Caribbean and Central American countries for joint activities and programmes related to countering drug trafficking and related organized crime. This commitment formalizes the framework of the Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Mechanism, and so both individual countries, as well as the region more generally, will serve as joint operators and beneficiaries of UNODC technical assistance.
During the 52nd Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held in Vienna from 11-20 March 2009, Member States approved Resolution L.21 which established the “Follow-up to the Ministerial Conference on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Transnational Organized Crime, and Terrorism as Challenges for Security and Development in the Caribbean”, therein requesting UNODC to develop a partnership and monitoring mechanism while urging Member States of the Commission to provide voluntary contributions and technical assistance for the implementation of the project.

Similarly, Resolution L.9 was also approved during the 18th annual session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Vienna from 16 to 24 April 2009, which supports the establishment of the Santo Domingo Pact.

IV. Objectives of the Santo Domingo and Managua Partnership and Monitoring Mechanism

The overall objective is to help governments of the Caribbean and Central American regions to control and reduce the level of drug trafficking and related transnational organized crime by improving national, as well as regional capacities to adequately confront the challenges which are directly resulting from being positioned along the trafficking routes which exist between one of the biggest drug producing regions (Andean countries and the Southern Cone) and the biggest drug consuming regions (the United States and Europe).

The Santo Domingo and Managua Partnership and Monitoring Mechanism programme focuses in the first instance on combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, and secondly on preventing crime and providing legal advice and technical assistance to countries in Central America and the Caribbean.\(^1\) The SDP/MM strives to achieve these objectives through the establishment of an information gathering, and policy-sharing mechanism, as well as through the establishment of expertise and training focal points which will be spread out throughout the entire region. In the Caribbean, the SDP will further complement and reinforce the already-existing Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre at the CARICOM Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) by inter-connecting all CARICOM IMPACS Member States and other Caribbean Member States in a single database installed at the IMPACS Secretariat in Trinidad and Tobago for the Caribbean.

The first implementation phase of the project (36 months) will focus on Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, with a future geographical coverage expanded to the South Cone, the rest of North America, and the Andean region.

In order to tackle these challenges, a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary response at both the regional and international level is required. Regional organizations such as CARICOM IMPACS, SICA, and OAS have recognized the importance of adopting an integrated regional response to the threats posed by drugs and crime.

\(^1\) Countries in Central America and the Caribbean make-up the SDP/MM’s initial membership. It is important to underline that the SDP/MM invites all countries which make up the Americas to join this inter-regional programme. The more countries work together to combat drug trafficking and organized crime, the more effective the SDP/MM will be.
The Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Mechanism will also take stock in its inception phase of all coordination and consultation mechanisms already in place in order to avoid duplication.

V. Structure and Functioning of the Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Partnership and Monitoring Mechanism

The Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Partnership and Monitoring Mechanism serves both the integrated regional programme for Central America, as well as the integrated regional programme for the Caribbean, and is built on three strategic elements:

(1) a Consultative and Coordination Mechanism; 
(2) an Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism; and 
(3) an Assistance and Programming Mechanism for normative issues, including building the capacities of key national actors.

The Consultative and Coordination Mechanism will facilitate periodical consultations at the expert and policy levels between partners to identify, discuss, and set in motion concrete measures to stem the increasing level of drug trafficking and related organized crime in the region. Through the SDP/MM, expert group meetings/expert round tables, joint assessment missions\(^2\), as well as regional and international conferences will be organized with an overall objective of developing and implementing evidence-based policies and plans. At the technical level, particular attention will also be paid to the selection of participants of experts’ round tables so as to ensure the operational focus of these meetings. As much as possible, recommendations made within the framework of the Consultative and Coordination Mechanism will be practical and in line with SMART criteria, i.e that recommendations should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based. At the policy level, UNODC will ensure that meetings are focused and do not duplicate other existing fora such as the Commission on Narcotic Drugs or the HONLEA.

As it was previously mentioned, the Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism (ADAM) for Central America and the Caribbean is an internet-based coordination mechanism for technical assistance, information sharing and data collection similar to the one which is most effectively in force as part of the Paris Pact Initiative.\(^3\)

ADAM will consolidate information, factual reports, expertise, information on modi operandi and interdiction modalities (mainly through the sharing of best practices), as well as technical assistance projects. In this way, ADAM will ensure the most effective use of scarce donor resources by avoiding project duplications.

Through ADAM, UNODC will provide its partners with information on all ongoing projects concerned with combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in Central America and the Caribbean (and the rest of the Americas where possible), as well as other international projects linked to the region.

\(^2\) Joint assessment missions will be instrumental in assisting with supporting the implementation of recommendations made in the framework of the Consultative and Coordination Mechanism. 

\(^3\) For more information on the Paris Pact, see www.paris-pact.net
All partners will obtain access to the platform - however, in order to guarantee that information collected, exchanged and shared over this database is secure, there will be three different access codes for three different participating groups (enumeration from the widest access to the lowest access): (1) experts (participating countries); (2) policy makers (participating countries); and (3) funding partners (bilateral and multilateral).

In this way experts and policy makers will have a forum in which information and expertise can be shared and which is flexible enough to meet their specific needs. Donors and partners will have slightly more restricted access since information at this level will have already undergone expert evaluations and appropriate analyses by both national and regional experts. As a result, donors will be provided with an internet-based tool allowing them access to accurate information and more comprehensive assessments of the national initiatives and UNODC activities. Moreover, donors can be confident that programme duplications are at a minimum and that best practices are being shared transparently.

Through an **Assistance and Programming Mechanism on Normative Areas**, UNODC can assist SDP/MM countries in reviewing and drafting national legislation (e.g. through the provision of model laws), thus facilitating the ratification and implementation of international legal instruments pertaining to drugs and organized crime with a special focus on UN standards and norms, particularly on drug control, the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), and the Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Training will also be provided when required.

All countries involved in the Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Mechanism project are committed partners with an interest in establishing a regional and international network of information and expertise. The network will function as the primary tool for cooperation between participating authorities and will be constructed in a way which provides for new partners and organizations to join.

In parallel and in support of the SDP/MM, so-called Centres of Excellence (CoE), currently in the process of being established by UNODC within the framework of the new integrated regional programming approach, will also serve as focal points for expertise, training, data collection and analysis. Three CoEs are expected to be operational in the first semester of 2010: one in El Salvador which will be concerned with urban crime; the second one in Panama with special focus on maritime security and container control; a third CoE on Organized Crime is expected to be established in Guatemala. Other CoEs will be established at a latter stage in Central America and the Caribbean depending on identified needs and subject to funding.

The Centres of Excellence, in conjunction with the UNODC Regional Offices in Mexico and Panama, as well as with the decentralized Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Partnership and Monitoring Mechanism will foster strategic partnerships with interregional agencies such as CARICOM, SICA, SEGIB (Ibero-American Secretariat), and OAS in order to unite and streamline existing regional initiatives, and the idea being to facilitate synergies and consequently multiply results and use resources more efficiently. Strengthening the effectiveness and quality of existing regional projects, programmes and activities can thus be realized through the provision of modest additional funding. Furthermore, experts recruited for the CoEs will work together in order to foster joint programming, ensuring coherent and mutually-reinforcing performances across the region.
Initial Member States committed to taking part in the Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Mechanism include all CARICOM Member States, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and the Central American countries (Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Belize). Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that all countries in the Americas will be urged to join this cooperation, monitoring and information sharing system, therefore, a rapid rise in membership is expected in the future.

A decentralized SDP/MM coordination office will be established in the region and will consist of a Programme Coordinator (P4) for the Central American (SICA) Member States (based in Panama) and a Technical Coordinator (P3) for the CARICOM IMPACS Member States (based at the IMPACS Secretariat). Together, these will be responsible for managing, implementing, and supervising the effectiveness of ADAM; supervising and cooperating with national focal points; organizing and managing conferences, workshops, and round table discussion groups; and coordinating assessment missions in the region. Additionally, a network of 13 high-caliber national programme assistants/analysts (G6) will be deployed to selected pilot countries to cover those countries not yet included. For example, the specific programme analysts will also be responsible for the following: Belize-Belize; Barbados-Barbados; El Salvador (SICA Secretariat, covering El Salvador); Nicaragua-Nicaragua; Guyana (at the UNODC, CARICOM, IMPACS, SICA, SEGIB, OAS, etc.)

Funding partners (multi and bilateral)

Focal Points of Member States

Network of National Strategic Analysts

Consultative Mechanism

Centres of Excellence

International Organizations

Network of Prosecutors

Experts & Policy Makers from Central America, and Caribbean

ADAM

Legal Assistance

SANTO DOMINGO PACT AND MANAGUA MECHANISM

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4 These pilot countries include: Belize, Barbados, El Salvador (SICA Secretariat), Nicaragua, Honduras, Guyana (CARICOM Secretariat), Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Saint Lucia (OECS Secretariat), Trinidad and Tobago (IMPACS Secretariat), and at UNODC headquarters in Vienna, Austria. Specifically, the programme analysts stationed in some pilot countries will be responsible for covering those countries not yet included. For example, the specific programme analysts will also be responsible for the following: Belize; Barbados; El Salvador (SICA Secretariat, covering El Salvador); Nicaragua-Nicaragua; Guyana (at the
liaise with respective government authorities, and will be responsible for gathering and organizing data on an ongoing basis, and providing the international community with brief analytical reports on matters related to drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and other relevant information pertaining to the coordination and strategic orientation of technical assistance at the field level\(^5\). In addition, the Studies and Threat Analysis Section from UNODC Vienna will provide technical backstopping whenever required to the network of strategic analysts, notably in terms of methodology guidance and skills development.

In order for this to be effective, National Focal Points will be established in each of the SDP/MM member countries with key government counterparts serving as coordination and liaison officers in SDP/MM related matters.

**VI. Key Activities**

- Establish a two-pronged *Consultative Mechanism* facilitating periodical exchanges at the expert and policy levels between partners in order to identify and develop measures against drug trafficking and organized crime in the Central American and Caribbean regions. This will also include organizing experts’ round-tables, joint assessment missions, as well as regional and international conferences.

- Establish an internet-based automated donor assistance mechanism (*ADAM*) for Central America and the Caribbean, providing for the possibility to expand this to all countries in the Americas during the second phase.

- Establish Centres of Excellence (CoEs)\(^6\) tasked with implementing capacity building activities, training, developing joint operations and supporting joint programming at the regional level.\(^7\).

- Develop and implement evidence-based policies and plans through the establishment of a network of National Strategic Analysts\(^8\) in the region.\(^9\) These NSAs will liaise with law enforcement agencies and national drugs authorities, as well as officials from relevant security, justice, customs, and prisons services in order to gather, consolidate and analyze information. Thus, a good working relationship between these NSAs and

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\(^5\) Gathering and organisation of data by the analysts will also contribute to the standardisation of data gathering in the field of drugs and crime and facilitate regional comparisons.

\(^6\) The establishment of centres of excellence is subsumed in the UNODC Regional Programme for Central America and thus its outputs, activities and separate budget are included therein.

\(^7\) A Caribbean Centre of Excellence will be established at the CARICOM IMPACS Secretariat in Trinidad and Tobago.

\(^8\) Referred to previously as national programme assistants (G6).

\(^9\) The Pilot countries for the establishment of these NSAs are the ones stated under footnote 5 of page 9.
relevant law enforcement and justice authorities is imperative, and cooperation should be supported at all levels.

- Set-up an assistance and programming mechanism on normative and strategic areas, including capacity building of key national actors. UNODC will provide advice and training to support the implementation of the recommendations decided within the context of the two pronged consultative mechanism.

- Provide support for strengthened partnerships, with existing regional organizations such as CARICOM, SICA, OAS and SEGIB, as well as with INTERPOL, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the World Customs Organization (WCO), the Maritime Analysis and Operation Centre-Narcotics (MAOC-N), UN-HABITAT (especially in the field of urban crime prevention), and other selected partners.

VII. Key Outcomes

- A sense of shared responsibility fostered, joint networks established, and information disseminated and shared among SDP/MM partners on matters related to drug trafficking and organized crime.

- Increased effectiveness and efficiency, as well as increased Caribbean-Central American inter-regional coordination, on counter-drug trafficking and transnational organized crime technical assistance, based on existing mechanisms such as the CARICOM’s Management Framework for Crime & Security, the Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre and IMPACS, as well as similar mechanisms in SICA for the Central American region.

- Best-practices shared and promoted as they relate to countering illicit drug trafficking and transnational organized crime.

- Support given to enforcing national and regional drug control plans.

- Higher compliance with international legal standards concerned with drug trafficking and related transnational organized crime, as well as increased ratification and implementation of relevant international conventions and protocols.

- Increased quality and accessibility of anti-drug trafficking and organized crime expertise, as well as improved analytical capacities throughout the Caribbean and Central American regions.\(^{10}\)

- New programming initiatives and strategies for key countries in the region designed and agreed upon.

- Implementation of ADAM in Central America and the Caribbean in which updated information on activities aimed at combating drug trafficking and transnational

\(^{10}\) This is one of the key outcomes of the CARICOM’s draft Regional Crime & Security Strategy. However the focus of this outcome are the Caribbean and Central American regions.
organized crime in the Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Mechanism region is collected and utilized. By 2011, at least 75% of Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Mechanism partners should be regularly contributing to, and using ADAM as a strategic tool.

VIII. Priority Actions and timeline for the start-up of the SDP/MM

March /April 2010:

(1) Establishing a functional decentralized coordination office in Panama for Central America\(^1\) (in close coordination with the Santo Domingo Pact Coordinating office for the Caribbean at the IMPACS Secretariat in Trinidad).

(2) A P4 level Programme Coordinator and a G4 level programme assistant/National Strategic Analyst will be contracted and posted in the coordination office in Panama for Central America, a P3 level Technical Cooperation Expert and a G6 National Strategic Analyst for the Caribbean will be posted at the IMPACS Secretariat in Trinidad and Tobago. These will be in charge of the organization and management of all SDP activities.

(3) The 13 additional high-calibre programme assistants/NSAs will be recruited and/or appointed in coordination with the relevant pilot country authorities (refer to footnote 5 on page 9). Equipment will also be provided to the relevant offices such as telephones, computers, internet, and access to the ADAM system.

(4) Two temporary technicians will be contracted to set-up and install the ADAM system for Central America and the Caribbean. Moreover, a G4 level technical assistant should be recruited for the duration of the programme to be placed in the coordination office in Panama. This technician will be responsible for the more technical applications of the ADAM system, and will assist with coordinating information as it is put into the system from the various pilot offices.

(5) National focal points will be appointed, and all necessary Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), cooperation, and confidentiality agreements will be negotiated and signed.

May 2010:

(6) A Handbook on the use of ADAM will be developed and associated training workshops will be organized.

\(^{11}\) In the context of Delivering as One UN, UNODC intends to maximize resource utilization by establishing the SDP/MM coordination office in Panama, Headquarters of the UN Directors’ Board for Latin America and the Caribbean regions.
(7) A comprehensive survey will be conducted in order to assess the status of existing information-sharing and research gathering measures as they are presently in place in the SDP/MM region.

(8) A week-long coordination workshop/training seminar will take place at the newly established coordination office in Panama, bringing together all the newly appointed NSAs from the pilot countries of the first phase. Not only will this establish open lines of communication between the individuals, but it will promote constructive dialogue and cooperation among those who will be responsible for providing the SDP/MM coordination office in Panama with all relevant information and research pertaining to illicit drug trafficking and organized crime in the region. Moreover, this meeting will also involve in-depth training on the use of the ADAM system so that from the outset of the project, all those involved in the practical use of the system will be using it in the same way.

June 2010:

(9) Following the coordination meeting between the coordination offices in Panama and Trinidad and Tobago and the NSAs, a subsequent meeting will take place for the National Focal Points. The idea behind this is to provide a practical platform for information-sharing (both formal and informal) and also to educate the appointed focal points on the importance of the SDP/MM so that their future cooperation will be assured. Moreover, involving national representatives in the programme implementation process from the beginning will promote and facilitate regional ownership of the programme.

IX. Beneficiaries

Direct project beneficiaries include law-enforcement and national stakeholders such as the Anti-Narcotics Police, Customs officers, national Coastguards, Drug Control Units, the IMPACS and SICA Secretariats, as well as Governments from the Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Mechanism partner countries. All these stakeholders will benefit from increased knowledge on the various technical assistance activities in the region, expert networking at both the regional and international levels, access to best practices, and ultimately increased capacities enabling improved targeted interventions. Direct programme beneficiaries also include the Governments of countries linked to the region, as well as those who will benefit from a more regional coordinated approach to countering illicit drug trafficking and organized crime (including origin, transit, and destination countries). In addition, increased international attention and awareness of the extent of the problem will promote technical assistance and will attract donors’ interest in the region. UNODC, in cooperation with all Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Mechanism partners will benefit from this programme, directly and indirectly, through receipt of required data, information and analyses. Moreover, priority actions will more easily be identified, and specific needs will be targeted, providing an ideal platform for informed decision-making related to future resource allocations.
X. Monitoring, Review, Reporting and Evaluation

As a result of frequent meetings relating to this project, UNODC and Santo Domingo Pact and Managua Mechanism partners have sufficient tools in place for constant monitoring and review. Reports on the expert meetings and policy consultative group meetings will be provided and circulated to all SDP/MM partners by the programme coordinator in Panama. In addition, quarterly analytical reports on activities and achievements in the fight against drug trafficking and related organized crime in the region will be distributed. These reports will be produced by the NSAs based in pilot field offices. In addition, any information deemed relevant to the work of the project will also be made public to SDP/MM partners and distributed by the programme coordinator. The project will have a mid-term, as well as a final evaluation, which will both be prepared by independent evaluators.