

**Video Message by Ambassador Adam Namm
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Greetings from the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, known by its Spanish language acronym, CICAD. I thank UNODC for the opportunity to present the Organization of American States' perspective on the range of illicit drugs and drug markets in the Western Hemisphere.

As you may know, CICAD is the consultative and advisory body of the Organization of American States on the drug problem, and it serves as a regional forum for open discussion and the promotion of coordinated efforts to address the drug issue.

In accordance with the OAS Hemispheric Drug Strategy and its corresponding Plan of Action, the Executive Secretariat of CICAD assists OAS member states by providing technical assistance and specialized training focused on capacity building, and by conducting in-depth research and evaluation regarding drug-related issues.

In March of this year we published the Report on Drug Use in the Americas 2019, which is available on our webpage: www.CICAD.oas.org. The report provides an analysis of drug use across the Hemisphere based on data submitted by 33 OAS member states. The Report highlights the following facts:

- Drug use is appearing at young ages;
- In the general population, cannabis use is increasing among the countries that have trend data, and about half of the countries included in the Report show increases in cocaine use;
- Although traditional drugs are still being consumed, the presence of new psychoactive substances (NPS) continues to grow;
- Females in some member states are now using certain drugs either at the same, or at higher rates, than males, in particular tranquilizers without medical prescription; and
- The United States and Canada are experiencing serious levels of synthetic opioids abuse, including fentanyl and its analogues, resulting in some of the highest overdose rates in the world.

We also see a significant increase of the production of illicit drugs in the region. Allow me to provide a few examples:

- First, when it comes to plant-based drugs, there has been a major expansion in coca and poppy cultivation in source countries, which has led to higher levels of cocaine and heroin production;
- Second, regarding synthetic drugs, substances such as methamphetamine are being manufactured closer to consumer markets as criminal organizations seek to reduce the risks of detection and interdiction by law enforcement agencies;
- Third, there is an increase in local production and diversion of precursor chemicals that are used in the manufacture of illicit drugs; and
- Fourth, a significant number of countries have found clandestine laboratories, both in rural as well as urban areas. Such sites are usually extremely toxic and constitute a deadly threat for law enforcement personnel during dismantling operations.

Regarding drug trafficking, an estimated 80% of illicit drugs from the region are smuggled via maritime means, including container vessels, fast boats, pleasure craft, and semi-submersibles. However, the sale of illicit narcotics through the Internet is a growing problem in our member states, as the anonymity and global reach of the “Darknet” and “Deepweb” provide traffickers with ideal conditions to reach a wider consumer market. Most OAS member states currently lack the high-tech detection methods necessary to effectively address this problem, as well as the adequate training to handle potentially contaminated packages safely.

Another growing challenge in the Hemisphere is the issue of microtrafficking, which is the sale of illicit drugs in small-quantities at the retail or street level. This phenomenon is expanding in the major cities of OAS member states, causing significant violence among drug dealers, and affecting overall public security.

CICAD will continue to support OAS member states as they address the drug problem, with special emphasis on promoting regional cooperation and coordination with and among our member states, as well as in collaboration with valuable strategic partners such as UNODC.

Thank you very much for your attention.