



INFOSERV

60th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)



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COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

PM Christie Applauds Efforts of OAS/CICAD in Hemisphere



PARADISE ISLAND, The Bahamas – Bahamian Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Rt. Hon. Perry Gladstone Christie, commended the Organization of American States and, more specifically, its Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) for efforts in assisting Member States in addressing drug use and abuse in the hemisphere while facilitating initiatives aimed at drug reduction and control.

"Over the last three decades your hemispheric objective for the goal of a drug free world, and your endeavour to assist Member States in addressing drug use and abuse in the hemisphere, has been meaningful, full and impactful," Prime Minister Christie said during the Inauguration Ceremony (Opening Ceremony) of the 60th Regular Session of CICAD, at Atlantis Resort on Paradise Island.

"Since the inception of CICAD, my country has partnered with the Commission and has aligned its national anti-drug strategies and other initiatives in drug control with our national efforts.

"This affiliation improves each year and demonstrates cooperative action and shared responsibility at the highest level," he said. "Our new National Anti-Drug Strategy 2017-2022 will be strategically aligned with the new hemispheric plan of action."

Prime Minister Christie said it was clear that effectively combating the world's drug problem - with its myriad challenges - requires a multilateral approach and the pooling of resources.

"Due to the geographical location and the archipelagic makeup of our islands and cays, coupled with the vast expanse of our territorial waters, our country is used as a major transshipment point," he stated. "As a result, for us in The Bahamas, interdiction efforts continue to be a critical aspect of our strategy to ensure that our nation remains safe and tranquil."

Mr. Christie said the Government has embarked upon several major investments at the local level to improve border security. The most significant and impactful of these, he said, is the Sandy Bottom Project -- a \$232 million dollar investment upgrade to the Royal Bahamas Defence Force.

"A major component of this project has been the acquisition of nine patrol vessels; the refitting of two existing crafts; dredging and modernization of harbours; development of two existing bases and the construction of a new base on an island on our southern border (along with) the decentralization of operations at strategic locations in the northern, central and southern Bahamas has resulted in increased air and sea patrol."

Prime Minister Christie said tackling the drug problem requires intervention not only on the supply side, but also requires the appropriate allocation of resources to reduce demand, especially among the nation's youth.

"The protection of the youth is of paramount concern as they are one of the most vulnerable groups in the world's drug problem," Mr. Christie said. "Locally, we have directed our efforts to counter this trend by increasing opportunities for young persons to be exposed to drug education and prevention. I call upon all of us to always keep the youth in mind in our discussions, crafting, implementation and evaluation of strategies to counter the drug problem."

Bahamas to use position as CICAD Chair to address at-risk youth



Dr. Carmen Masias Claux, Executive Director of the National Commission for Development and Life Without Drugs (DEVIDA), Peru the outgoing CICAD Chair, welcomes Bahamian Minister of National Security, Dr. the Hon. Bernard J. Nottage (representing The Bahamas) to the CICAD Chair.

NASSAU, The Bahamas – The Bahamas will use its position as “Chair” of the Inter-American Drug Abuse and Control Commission (CICAD) to advance policies and strategies that will positively impact at-risk youth who are “most vulnerable to the use and abuse of drugs.”

Bahamian officials say serving as “CICAD Chair” over the next year will allow The Bahamas: “To have a platform and a space where we can discuss and share critical information with those young persons who are at the crossroads who will be making the decision whether they should use or experiment with drugs or live drug-free lives.”

“There are a lot of things out there in the markets – you have beadies, e-cigarettes, hookas - whose manufacturers are marketing these products as healthier alternatives to cigarettes and drugs which they are not,” Assistant Superintendent of Police and National Anti-Drug Secretariat Director, Dr. Chaswell Hanna said.

“They are just as lethal, they are just as toxic, and so once we provide young persons with the facts, we believe they will be in a better position to make the right decision on whether or not they should use drugs and that is critical because if we can stop the amount of young people using drugs, or beginning to use drugs on the front end, we will have less focus on the back-end when we deal with treatment. So it’s all about prevention – preventing persons from becoming drug addicts.”

The Bahamas has already received high marks for its public health approach to drug dependency and its proposed establishment of drug treatment courts and community youth centres for youth drug dependents that will steer at-risk youth away from the pitfalls associated with the illicit drug trade and drug use and abuse.

CICAD officials say one of the key issues for them right now is the public health approach to drug dependency; not criminalizing drug dependency but seeing it as a disease and focusing more on rehabilitation and treatment.

“The answer is not to lock away drug dependents. On the contrary, we have to look after them in the sense of providing them with the necessary rehabilitation and treatment services.”

Dr. Hanna said The Bahamas has the backing of Organization of American States Secretary-General, Mr. Luis Almagro, in their focus on at-risk youth.

“The OAS Secretary-General is pleased with this thrust and that was demonstrated by the fact that he actually took time out from his schedule to be with us in The Bahamas. As he stated in his opening remarks, we have reached the point of no return, we cannot turn back with this public health approach; with this fight against drugs. Too much time has been invested; too much resources has been put into this and I think he is going to be very supportive of our chairmanship throughout the coming year and he has pledged his support for the OAS to assist us wherever they can,” Dr. Hanna added.

Delivering the Keynote Address during the Inauguration Ceremony (Opening Ceremony) Bahamian, Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Perry Gladstone Christie outlined a number of strategies currently being used in The Bahamas to address the concerns of the country’s youth, or that will be implemented, that can be used as a basis for the focus on youth at the CICAD Level.

OAS Secretary General Urges Government Partnerships in Drug Trafficking Fight



Minister of National Security, Hon. Bernard J. Nottage (left) presents OAS Secretary-General Mr. Luis Almagro with a set of Bahamian Commemorative Coins during the 60th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) held November 2-4 at Atlantis, Paradise Island, The Bahamas.

PARADISE ISLAND, The Bahamas – Significant interventions must be taken in order to curb or eliminate drug trafficking in the region. This, according to Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) Luis Almagro, will be the best course of action. Mr. Almagro said that drug trafficking and the associated actions that support the trade are a ‘threat to democracy.’

He was speaking at the Inauguration Ceremony of the 60th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) at Atlantis, Paradise Island, November 2-4, 2016.

He said in recent years, several initiatives have been implemented to thwart the efforts of criminal organizations, which conduct their business in the region. He said that all governments in the region must partner in order to discourage drug trafficking in their respective countries. He also pointed to the important role that civil society plays in assisting governments in achieving this goal.

He also spoke of protocols, which have been established by the OAS in recent years to combat drug trafficking, but said that much has to be done – including maintenance of the Secretariat for Drug Trafficking, which he believes is key in assisting the fight.

In addition, Mr. Almagro said that every effort should be taken to strengthen CICAD, as the elimination of drug trafficking would entail a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional approach.

CICAD was established by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1986. Each member government appoints a high-ranking representative to the Commission, which meets twice a year.



Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) Luis Almagro addresses delegates and guests during the 60th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission CICAD, which is the Western Hemisphere's policy forum for dealing with the drug scourge. Mr. Almagro is pictured speaking during the opening ceremony of the conference, which was held at the Grand Ballroom, Coral Tower, at Atlantis Paradise Island, November 2-4, 2016.

Bahamas Government to Establish Drug Treatment Court, Community Youth Centres as Alternatives for At-Risk Youth



PARADISE ISLAND, The Bahamas – Bahamian Minister of National Security the Hon. Dr. Bernard J. Nottage said Wednesday that The Bahamas is in the “critical stages” of establishing a Drug Treatment Court to provide an alternative to incarceration for drug-dependent offenders through treatment and rehabilitation.

Addressing the Inauguration Ceremony of the 60th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), Dr. Nottage said The Bahamas has embarked upon on a series of initiatives focused on at-risk youth including the establishment of Community Youth Centres that will provide healthy alternative services and programmes.

Dr. Nottage said the focus is as a result of youth being “overwhelmingly represented as both victims and perpetrators of drug-related crime and violence locally.”

“Participating youth will receive training in hospitality, self-esteem building, motivational and personal development,” Dr. Nottage said. “These centres will be a space where youth can have positive interactions and hopefully be dissuaded from using illicit drugs, joining gangs or engaging in conflict with the law.

Dr. Nottage told delegates that The Bahamas is “resolved” in its responses to the drug problem.

“The Bahamas is a willing and committed partner and confident that underpinning the discussions of this 60th Regular Session, the resolve is united to improve the effectiveness of our responses to the drug problem in the mutual interests of all Member States.

Bahamas Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Bernard Nottage.

“It is our hope that ideas and experiences shared over the next three days will bolster our efforts in addressing the world drug problem.”

The National Security Minister said The Bahamas has been on the “frontline” of drug control and reduction and has committed itself to “weakening illicit drug enterprises that exist around us regionally and globally” over the past four decades.

“Even though The Bahamas is not a major producer of illicit drugs, our country is strategically situated within the transshipment zone between markets in North America and Europe. Due to our sparsely populated archipelago and vast water borders, transnational criminals continue to traffic drugs through our maritime borders and ports of entry.”

Dr. Nottage said cocaine and marijuana – which he called the signature drugs produced in the region – are the principle drugs in the transit traffic through The Bahamas.

“Some of the drugs that are moved through our country make their way on our streets and negatively impact our communities and the most vulnerable among us, in particular our youth.”

Dr. Nottage said the programmes the Government has implemented and will implement, will help to reverse those negative impacts on the country’s at-risk youth insofar as crime, criminality and violence are concerned.



NADS Director: Bahamas Moving in Right Direction in War on Drugs



Director of The Bahamas' National Anti-Drug Secretariat, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Dr. Chaswell Hanna



Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission



PARADISE ISLAND, The Bahamas – Director of The Bahamas’ National Anti-Drug Secretariat, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Dr. Chaswell Hanna, says the country is moving “in the right direction” in the war on drugs and in changing its outlook on drug control from a punitive one to a public health issue.

Primary in that change in outlook is the establishment of a Drug Treatment Court for at-risk youth who are drug users and abusers.

“I give us high marks for what we are doing. We are talking to the right people. We are putting the right strategies in place. We are exploring new ideas and initiatives in the right areas; we are being guided by best practices and we are changing our outlook on drug control from a punitive one to a public health one,” Dr. Hanna said.

“Our international partnerships - particularly with the United States of America in Operation Bahamas Turks and Caicos which is effective and will continue to be effective on the Supply Reduction Side – in addition to our partnerships with CICAD (Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission and the OAS (Organization of American States – CICAD’s parent body) are very effective and so I think we are in the right space to improve what we are doing in drug control.”

Dr. Hanna said the establishment of the Drug Treatment Court for at-risk Bahamian youth who are drug users and abusers will be another “significant intervention.”

Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Bernard J. Nottage announced during the Inauguration Ceremony (Opening Ceremony) of the 60th Regular Session of CICAD that local officials were in the “critical stages” of establishing a Drug Treatment Court to provide an alternative to incarceration for drug-dependent offenders – through treatment and rehabilitation.

“The establishment of a Drug Treatment Court will give persons who are suffering from drug addiction an opportunity to get better, to get healthier and to get help so that they can live productive, drug-free lives,” Dr. Hanna said.

“It’s very significant because we understand that people who use and abuse drugs suffer from a disease and you do not punish someone who is suffering from a disease. Instead, you provide them with treatment opportunities because you want them to stop abusing drugs.”

While the focus has been changed to a public health approach for drug users and abusers, Dr. Hanna warned that persons involved in the illicit drug trafficking trade will still be “aggressively pursued and punished.”

“Now I want to be clear, the move to a public health approach will not negate the efforts that we are doing as they relate to traffickers because traffickers must be, and should be, treated differently from the abusers.

“The traffickers are still going to be treated punitively, aggressively, but the abusers, those who are most vulnerable in this chain, are going to be treated as patients and they are going to get help because we want them to stop abusing drugs to live drug-free, crime-free lives,” Dr. Hanna added.

Government ‘Determined’ in its Fight Against Crime and Criminality



Bahamas Minister of National Security the Hon. Dr. Bernard Nottage.

PARADISE ISLAND, The Bahamas – The Government of The Bahamas is “determined” in its intent that drug trafficking, crime and criminality will not jeopardize the economic, social and political stability and development of the Commonwealth, Minister of National Security, the Hon. Dr. Bernard J. Nottage said Wednesday.

Addressing the Inauguration Ceremony of the 60th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse and Control Commission (CICAD), Dr. Nottage pointed to what he called “an intrinsic link between the country’s national security challenges and the illicit drug trade” because of offshoots of the drug trade such as arms trafficking, human trafficking and illegal immigration.

“Let me refer, in particular to the serious challenges stemming from arms trafficking, human trafficking and illegal immigration,” Dr. Nottage said. “These illicit activities, particularly arms trafficking, are definite offshoots of the drug trade and sit on the platform created by drug trafficking. Consequently, a single trafficking operation may now involve drugs, guns and illegal migrants. However, we are determined that drug trafficking, crime and criminality should not jeopardize the economic, social and political stability of our country.”

Dr. Nottage said, the current drug policies of The Bahamas are focused on an appropriate balance between the traditional law enforcement approaches and alternative development programmes, including public health initiatives.

He said partnerships such as the one with CICAD, have been “vital” in countering the challenges of illicit drugs. Dr. Nottage said the United States, a strategic partner through its International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) Section and Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), has provided funding, training and technical assistance to local law enforcement and justice-sector officials.

“Another key alliance is Operation Bahamas and Turks and Caicos (OPBAT) which was established as a multi-agency international drug interdiction effort, focused on impeding the flow of illegal drugs from South America, the Caribbean, Turks and Caicos, The Bahamas and the United States.

“To complement these partnerships a number of local initiatives have been undertaken by our Government. One of the most recent ones is the Citizen Security and Justice Programme. Key among this \$20 million Project’s objectives is the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders, including those serving time for drug related offences.”

Dr. Nottage said since youth are “overwhelmingly represented” as both victims and perpetrators of drug-related crime and violence locally, The Bahamas has embarked upon on a series of initiatives focused on at-risk youth including the establishment of community youth centres that will provide healthy alternative services and programmes.

“Participating youth will receive training in hospitality, self-esteem building, motivational and personal development,” Dr. Nottage said. “These centres will be a space where youth can have positive interactions and hopefully be dissuaded from using illicit drugs, joining gangs or engaging in conflict with the law.”

Bahamas to use position as CICAD Chair to address at-risk youth



Delegates attending the Inauguration Ceremony (Opening Ceremony) of the 60th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) Wednesday, November 2, 2016 at Atlantis, Paradise Island, Bahamas. Also pictured (from left at front table) are: Bahamian Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Philip E. Davis; Minister of National Security, Bernard J. Nottage and Bahamian Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Perry Gladstone Christie.

Some of those issues have been identified as a lack of conflict resolution skills, youth unemployment, an overwhelmed justice system and a deficient rehabilitative correctional process.

Mr. Christie said the launch of the Citizen Security and Justice Programme is an important cog in the approach. Funded by a \$20 Million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the initiative represents the “single largest investment in a coordinated and comprehensive policy to address crime” in The Bahamas – particularly at the youth level.

A second component of the Programme is the Social Crime and Violence Prevention component that aims to curb various forms of violence against children and adults through the provision of educational training and prevention programmes.

These interventions will include training activities for young people, adults and local leaders to address norms that promote the acceptance of violence – in association with non-governmental organizations, schools and other local partners.

The focus will be on parenting norms to reduce violent disciplinary measures, addressing attitudes about gender that encourage domestic violence, rape risk reduction, as well as counseling and conflict resolution, all of which will be delivered at newly refurbished community youth centres.

Officials also intend to launch school-based violence prevention activities to build conflict resolution skills; address anger management (and) foster caring, supportive relationships amongst youth.

“Finally, we will design youth violence interruption activities that will employ a public health approach addressing violence as a learned behaviour,” Mr. Christie added.

Bahamas Receives High Marks for its Hosting of 60th CICAD Session



Angela Crowdy, Assistant Executive Secretary, Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) presents Assistant Superintendent of Police Chaswell Hanna with a replica of the flags of the 35 countries that comprise Member States of the Organization of American States at the conclusion of the 60th Regular Session of CICAD held November 2-4 at Atlantis, Paradise Island The Bahamas.

PARADISE ISLAND, The Bahamas – The Bahamas received high marks for its efforts in hosting the 60th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) that concluded November 4, 2016, at Atlantis Resort, Paradise Island.

Angela Crowdy, the Executive Assistant Secretary of CICAD, said The Bahamas should be commended for its efforts in staging what she called a “highly successful Regular Session.”

Ms. Crowdy also commended Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for “putting together a fantastic agenda” and pledged CICAD’s and the Organization of American State’s (OAS) support for The Bahamas as the new CICAD ‘Chair.’

“I think it’s very commendable that, coming out of the challenge your country faced (as a result of the damage caused by Hurricane Matthew), that The Bahamas still agreed to host and Chair this meeting which is no small meeting,” Ms. Crowdy said.

“As CICAD, we look forward to working with The Bahamas as Chair of this important Commission. It’s a key time right now with a new Plan of Action and with the goals of the UNGASS Document. Our admiration is that your country came out of a very, very challenging situation, but the commitment The Bahamas has shown to our Commission is very, very admirable and we look forward to working with The Bahamas.”

Ms. Crowdy said one of the key documents coming out of the 60th Regular Session was the Plan of Action for 2016-2020 that will be a guide or a road map for Member States to implement the Drug Control Strategy, 2010.

Ms. Crowdy said The Bahamas’ public health approach to drug dependency is in line with the CICAD initiative. The Bahamas was given high points for its approach in this area particularly with the proposed establishment of drug treatment courts for at-risk youth.

“One of the key issues for us right now is the public health approach to drug dependency; not criminalizing drug dependency but seeing it as a disease and focusing more on rehabilitation and treatment I think that is key. The answer is not to lock away drug dependents. On the contrary, we have to look after them in the sense of providing them with the necessary rehabilitation and treatment services.”

Ms. Crowdy also applauded The Bahamas’ inclusion of members of civil society in the programme.

“They are key. They have to be a part of the decision-making process,” she said. “They are on the ground [and] they have interesting data. We can only face the drug problem if we work together; if we work in a coordinated fashion collaborating between governments, between countries, between Member States with many components such as civil society and international organizations.”

Ms. Crowdy said meetings such as the 60th Regular Session allow CICAD Member States to come together to discuss a variety of issues impacting them. The Commission was founded in 1986.

“The world has changed since 1986. The drug problem has changed as well and countries are facing different challenges, different situations and part of the objective of a meeting such as this is to bring together all of our Member States to discuss, to give them a policy forum in which to discuss and debate drug control policies as they go forward.

“The Sessions allow Member States to exchange best practices and experiences as well, while encouraging collaboration and sharing information on how we can construct policies in other Member States to help our youth.”

CICAD Highlights



Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Perry Gladstone Christie (right) and Minister of National Security, Bernard J. Nottage share a private moment during the Inauguration Ceremony (Opening Ceremony) of the 60th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) which opened November 2, 2016 at Atlantis, Paradise Island, The Bahamas.



The Observers Table at the Opening Session of the 60th Regular CICAD Session.



Bahamian Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States (OAS), His Excellency Dr. Elliston Rahming.



CICAD Highlights





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