

NATIONAL NEWS



ADDRESSING DELEGATES – Dr. Bridgette Rolle, Bahamas' Chair (second left), addresses delegates attending the Fifth Plenary Session of the 61st Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) Wednesday morning, April 26, 2017 at the General Services Building of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington, D.C., USA. Also pictured are Ambassador Adam Namm, CICAD Executive Secretary; Marya Hynes, Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID), ES/CICAD who served as Moderator of the Fifth Plenary Session and Jenny Fagua Duarte, EWS, Colombian Drug Observatory, Justice Ministry, Colombia, a Presenter. (BIS PHOTOS: MATT MAURA)

CICAD reviews 'early warning systems' for response to emerging drug problems

MATT MAURA
Bahamas Information Services

WASHINGTON, D.C., USA – The final day of the 61st Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) got underway Wednesday morning in the U.S. capital with the Fifth Plenary Session.

The focus of the Fifth Plenary was on “Early Warning Systems (EWS): Importance of Taking Action at a National Level.” Presenters for the Plenary were Diego Olivera, Secretary-General, National Drug Council, Uruguay and Jenny Fagua Duarte, EWS, Colombian Drug Observatory, Justice Ministry, Colombia. Marya Hynes, Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OIS), ES/CICAD served as Moderator.

The objective of the Fifth Plenary Session was to examine existing models for EWS and their importance as a tool for responding to emerging problems at a national and local level.



ATTENDING OAS SESSION – Chet Neymour, Deputy Chief of Mission/Alternate Representative, Permanent Mission of The Bahamas, with (at right) Krissy Hanna, Second Secretary/Vice-Consul/Alternate Representative-OAS, Embassy of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas and Carla Johnson, Executive Officer, National Anti-Drug Secretariat (NADS), Ministry of National Security, The Bahamas, just before entering the General Services Building of the Organization of American States (OAS), Washington, D.C., for the start of the sessions of the 61st Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD).

Wednesday’s Fifth Plenary also focused on “Strengthening Coordination and Promoting Cooperation Among Supply Reduction Agencies in the Hemisphere.” Meetings took place at the Organization of American States (OAS) General Services Building of the General Secretariat.

Roger Benze, International Affairs, Joint Inter-Agency task Force South, United States of America was the Presenter. Sergeant David Ramsey, Supply Reduction Officer, National Anti-Drug Secretariat (NADS), Ministry of National Security, The Bahamas, made the Introduction.

The objective of this session was to discuss counter illicit trafficking operations, information sharing and networking, including partner nation initiatives to detect and defeat the flow of illicit drug trafficking in the hemisphere.

A focus on Transforming National Drug Policies into Local Level Policies also took place during Wednesday morn-

ing’s Plenary Session. The objective was to present institutional experiences, structures and programs and discuss lessons learnt in the decentralization and local management of drug policies.

Panelists included Roberto Moro, Secretary of State, SEDRONAR, Argentina; Diego Olivera, General Secretary, National Drug Council, Uruguay and Patricio Bustos Streeter, National Director, SENDA, Chile.

The 61st Regular Session of CICAD concluded with the Sixth Plenary Session that included a Report of the Inter-Governmental Working Group (IWG) of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM); Consideration of Draft resolution for the 47th Regular Session of the OAS General Assembly; Remarks by OAS Permanent Observers and by International, Regional and Civil Society Organizations accredited by the Organization of American States (OAS) and Closing Remarks.

BAHAMIAN OFFICIAL APPLAUDS PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO TREATMENT OF DRUG USE AT CICAD

MATT MAURA
Bahamas Information Services

WASHINGTON, D.C., USA (BIS) April 25, 2017 – The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission’s decision to take a public health approach to the treatment of drug use and related disorders is one that should be embraced, Rochelle Basden, Deputy Director of Psychological Services at Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre in The Bahamas, told delegates attending the Third Plenary Session of the 61st CICAD Regular Session Tuesday at OAS Headquarters in the U.S. capital.

Basden said the public health dimension has gained momentum as nations strive for a more integrated and balanced approach to addressing the world drug problem.

“As an archipelagic nation stretching from Haiti in the South to Florida in the north, we share a strong history in drug interdiction with our ally, the United States of America, and Turks and Caicos through the OPBAT Initiative, but we recognize all too well the need for a shared responsibility in addressing the world drug problem,” Ms. Basden said.

“So we put our money where our mouth is and not only aim to curb supply and maintain law and order, but we also recognize the need to treat persons, families and communities affected

by drug use with dignity and respect. We therefore embrace a Public Health approach to the treatment of drug use disorders and related problems.”

Presenting on the subject, “Drug Treatment Services in the Caribbean Region,” as part of the Plenary Session that focused on “The Provision of Drug Treatment Services: Challenges and Solutions,” Ms. Basden said public health officials in The Bahamas have for some time held the view that a public health approach should be used in the treatment of drug use and related disorders.

Ms. Basden said Bahamian public health care officials are using a multi-disciplinary team approach to ensure that comprehensive assessment, individualized treatment, planning and referral to an “appropriate level” are carried out.

She said in an effort to improve standards across service areas, Sandilands Rehabilitation Centre, the Bahamas National Drug Council and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) partnered with Bahamian stakeholders (Government and Non-governmental Organizations – NGOs) to begin the drafting of Standards of Care for drug treatment centres in The Bahamas.

“Also, recent training programs offered by PROCER and the Colombo Plan received strong support from institutions/agencies and treatment



ROCHELLE BASDEN

professionals who participated in the training.”

(In 2006, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), under the Secretary for Multidimensional Security (SMS) of the Organization of American States (OAS), designed a program to develop and strengthen member states’ institutions, policies, and strate-

gies regarding treatment and rehabilitation for individuals with problems stemming from drug abuse and related violence.

The Training and Certification Programme for Drug Treatment, Rehabilitation and Violence Prevention, (PROCER) created a Training and Certification Model that may be implemented throughout the hemisphere in response to the need for trained prevention and treatment service providers working in violence and drug addiction.)

Ms. Basden said in addition to the use of a multi-disciplinary team approach, screening, comprehensive assessment, individualized treatment planning, referral, follow up and social reintegration, interventions such as individual, group and family therapy, psycho-education, motivational interviewing and enhancement therapy, cognitive behaviour therapy, occupational therapy and recreational therapy are used.

“These interventions form the bedrock of the treatment process at the Government facilities,” Ms. Basden said.

She said Inpatient drug treatment services are provided within the Government-operated Psychiatric Hospital (Sandilands), a medically managed facility, and includes detoxification and withdrawal management; partial hospitalization program; treatment for special populations experiencing co-occurring disorders, cog-

nitive impairment, complications of medical and psychiatric conditions, impaired function in older adults; as well as medium-term, medically monitored, residential treatment in a modified (evolving) therapeutic community setting, and follow-up and after-care services.

Ms. Basden said Bahamian magistrates have been “using their discretion” to offer drug treatment as an alternative to incarceration for a variety of drug-related offences, particularly in the cases of young, first time offenders.

“This process is facilitated through collaboration with the mental health system and Social Services,” she added.

Just last year during the 60th CICAD Regular Session held in Nassau, the Hon. Dr. Bernard J. Nottage, Minister of National Security, announced that The Bahamas was in the critical stages of establishing Drug Treatment Courts as alternatives to incarceration for drug-dependent offenders, providing treatment and rehabilitation.

Dr. Nottage said Bahamian officials had also embarked upon a series of other initiatives focused on at-risk youth, including the establishment of Community Youth Centres that will provide healthy alternative services and programs.

“Participating youth will receive training in hospitality, self-esteem building, motivational and personal develop-

ment. These centres will be spaces where youth can have positive interactions and hopefully be dissuaded from using illicit drugs, joining gangs, or engaging in conflict with the law.”

CICAD’s Executive Secretary, Ambassador Adam Namm, said Monday during the Opening Session of the 61st Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) that he looked forward to working with hemispheric ministries of health, national drug commissions and civil society in the formulation of public policy related to drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation in a shift in focus towards treating drug use and abuse as a public health issue.

“The new paradigm in drug control policy requires all of us to go beyond dialogues and achieve tangible results,” Ambassador Namm said. “This Executive Secretariat stands ready to assist our Member States as we face the challenge together through a holistic, balanced and multi-disciplinary approach, promoting dialogue and cooperation.

“Our Executive Secretariat will continue to train health professionals in order to improve the treatment offered to drug dependents, centering activities on the individual as the focus of interventions,” Ambassador Namm said.