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**DISPLACEMENT OF PEOPLE AND ILLICIT CROPS:
FOSTERING COOPERATION IN THE AMERICAS**

DISPLACEMENT OF PEOPLE AND ILLICIT CROPS: FOSTERING COOPERATION IN THE AMERICAS

INTRODUCTION

At the twenty-seventh regular session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the Organization of American States (CICAD/OAS) in Washington in May of 2000, the Argentine, Venezuelan, and other delegations requested that the Secretariat prepare a paper to examine displacement in the Americas. As a proposal it is meant to overview the antecedents, trends, and outlooks on displacement, as well as to demonstrate how an integrated program of research and action can assist and inform future Commission decisions about displacement in the Hemisphere.

Displacement presents a serious and complex challenge to governments of the region. In general, in relation to the drug problem, displacement refers to those people, illicit crops, and associated problems that cross national borders as the result of the production of and illicit trafficking in drugs and of the corrective measures taken by States in areas in which illicit crops are found.

Given the generalized application of illicit crop reduction strategies, such as eradication and other forms of interdiction in areas where such crops abound, as well as the extensive poverty encountered in border areas and other factors inducing the displacement of persons and illicit crops, it is proposed to foster regional cooperation by holding a CICAD-sponsored conference in which the member state representatives consider the impact of their national anti-drug policies, or of the lack thereof, on sister countries of the region.

The project aims to provide an overview of the "displacement problem," through a collaborative, action-oriented research program. It seeks to identify and promote regional solutions to the displacement problems, whose outcomes are also regional.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What factors contribute to the displacement of illicit crops and people to neighboring countries and what are the relationships between the factors contributing to displacement?
- What are the social, economic, and other consequences of this displacement?
- What conditions do the displaced persons encounter?
- Does displacement require regional action and solutions?

REGIONAL DISPLACEMENT

As a general proposition, as illicit cultivation is displaced from one area to another due to illicit crop eradication, increased state interdiction and control activities, and drug smugglers' own efforts to find better operating conditions, so too are the associated negative social and economic consequences.

This project attempts to probe the relationship between the application of various government strategies, such as eradication in illicit crop areas and the problems of regional displacement.

Thus, based on an empirical study of actual cases of illicit crop displacement in the region, an attempt will be made to discern the possible causes and effects of displacement. This will be done through a program of transnational research, conducted in cooperation with the government of each named member state.

The goal is to create a multilateral, regional dialogue and cooperative strategies to address displacement. The Executive Secretariat of CICAD is proposing a program of research integrated with a regional forum on displacement. There, the member states can review the results of the research, develop regional plans of action on displacement, determine budgetary requirements of the plans, and subsequently make recommendations to a future regular session of CICAD.

The project will consist of the following activities:

1. Conducting cross-national research on displaced people and illicit crops in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, and Peru.
2. Collaborate with national representatives designated by each country in executing the research.
3. Presenting preliminary results of research to the next regular session of CICAD.
4. Establishing a forum for countries to review and exchange information and draft a regional plan of action on displacement.

Presenting plans of action for consideration for funding by CICAD and other international agencies involved in the displacement issue.

Beneficiaries

This project will initially benefit OAS member states in the Andean region. However, the process of integrating research results and multilateral cooperation on the displacement issue has implications and potential benefits, Hemisphere-wide. The Caribbean, Central American, and North American member states may argue that they, too, are impacted by displacement. This project provides a "template" from which to conduct research and establish a multilateral forum on displacement. Like the

Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), this project is designed to promote and facilitate long-term cooperation in the Hemisphere on any variants that might arise in the use, production and trafficking of illicit drugs.