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**THE SECOND WESTERN HEMISPHERE DRUG POLICY LEADERSHIP
CONFERENCE**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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The II Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Leadership Conference, convened by the US Office for National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), proposes the following considerations as possible input for the agenda of the thirty-second regular session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States, which will be held in Mexico City in December 2002.

NEW TRENDS IN DRUG TRAFFICKING AND ABUSE

The Conference:

Issued an alert on the dangerous proliferation of synthetic drugs in the Western Hemisphere, and warned that the ease of manufacture and distribution of these harmful substance warrants an immediate intensive preventive and law enforcement response.

Proposed that CICAD convene an annual technical research conference, in cooperation with NIDA, and the competent authorities of the member states, on new drugs of abuse, to develop national and regional drug abuse prevention and treatment programs based on scientific evidence about the nature of addiction.

Encouraged Western Hemisphere countries to devote a higher percentage of their national budgets to research on the drug problem.

Noted with urgent concern the emergence of transnational criminal entrepreneurs whose trafficking in illicit drugs of all kinds, and in weapons, illicit profits, terrorism and women and children for purposes of sexual exploitation demands significantly increased international police and intelligence cooperation.

Reaffirms and stresses the crucial need for a holistic, multidisciplinary approach that integrates drug demand and supply reduction programs, and that relies on community support and action.

THE MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM) – EVALUATING THE EVALUATION

The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), set up within the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) at the direction of the Second Summit of the Americas held in Santiago, Chile in 1998, was designed to be an objective, technical and impartial procedure for peer assessment of each country's actions to address all aspects of the drug problem.

Although still evolving in its third year of existence, the Conference judged that the MEM has proved its worth as an effective instrument of international cooperation on the persistent, shared problem of drug trafficking and abuse. For shared problems, there is the clear need for a shared responsibility and a shared solution. To maintain and improve this pioneering multilateral assessment of the progress that Western Hemisphere countries have made in addressing the drug problem,

The Conference invites Governments to take the following steps:

- Make every effort to improve the quality and timeliness of the information and statistics they provide to the MEM process
- Make a renewed public commitment to act on the recommendations of the MEM
- Engage in an intensive program of public diplomacy to inform and engage national legislatures, opinion leaders and the general public about the MEM
- Ensure continuity and full participation by every national expert on the Governmental Experts Group responsible for drafting the MEM reports.

The Conference also considered that countries should continue working with CICAD to clearly identify those areas in which countries require additional technical and financial assistance to improve their counter-narcotics programs, and suggests to international organizations and donor countries that the MEM recommendations serve as a road-map for their cooperation on the drug problem.

The Conference considered that CICAD should examine some technical improvements to the MEM process, including standardizing on a hemisphere-wide basis methods of estimating the problems of cultivation of illicit crops, interdiction, arrests for drug-related crimes, and levels of substance abuse, as well as the development of common methodologies for the application of the MEM indicators.

NATIONAL DRUG COMMISSIONS

The Conference strongly reinforced the crucial role that National Drug Commissions and inter-ministerial dialogue play in coordinating national drug strategies, and proposed that countries reinforce the technical and managerial capacity of these bodies through the ongoing CICAD program.

DEMAND REDUCTION

The Conference discussed three aspects of a demand reduction strategy: preventing the initiation of drug use; early intervention with users who are not yet dependent on drugs, and treatment, rehabilitation and social reinsertion programs that are based on good assessment of individual clients, good case management, and follow-up support.

It is essential that the effectiveness of prevention and treatment programs be measured and confirmed through scientific evidence, in order to direct resources to successful efforts. Prevention programs should be rooted in the community and the family, and

promote healthy lifestyles, emphasize human development, and address the adverse health consequences of the use of all harmful substances, including alcohol and tobacco.

The Conference suggested that governments devote more resources to improving and expanding their drug treatment and rehabilitation programs, and alternative sentencing measures, recognizing the serious social and health consequences of addiction that include street crime, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, and sexually-transmitted diseases.

CORRUPTION

The Conference agreed that directly addressing corruption is a critical component of illicit drug control.

It was proposed that CICAD consider launching a project to help member states implement programs in schools and communities to change cultural tolerance of corruption

MARITIME DRUG TRAFFICKING

The Conference received an update on the Executive Seminar on Regional Cooperation against Narcotrafficking in the Eastern Pacific, part of the Inter-American Counterdrug Forum, which took place in Miami, Florida (August 27-28, 2002). Of particular note were the recommendations on operational communication and information exchange, operational coordination and cooperation as well as port security, the private sector's role in drug control and capacities for maritime monitoring and interdiction.

The Conference proposed that CICAD consider establishing an Expert Group on maritime cooperation to address these and other issues, and requested more information on the status of the regional agreement for maritime cooperation currently being negotiated for the Caribbean.