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**Address by Dr. Chaswell A. Hanna, Director, National Anti
Secretariat, Ministry of National Security, Commonwealth of
The Bahamas to the Sixty Second Regular Session of CICAD**

- Ms. Claudia Paz y Paz, Secretary for Multidimensional Security
- Ambassador Adam Namm, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission;
- Ms. Angela Crowdy, Assistant Secretary of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission;
- Distinguished commissioners and heads of delegation;
- Esteemed observers and special guests;
- Members of civil society
- Ladies and gentlemen:

Good Morning.

It gives me great pleasure to address this 62nd Regular Session of CICAD and offer you warm greetings from the Government and people of the beautiful islands of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. I am also pleased to offer my thanks and appreciation to all of you distinguished commissioners, observers and special guests, for your unwavering support and meaningful contributions received from your states and organizations throughout the time that my country served as Chair.

This was the first time that The Bahamas has served in such a prestigious capacity but it probably will not be the last. We very much enjoyed having you come to Atlantis, Paradise Island in November of last year as delegates of the 60th Regular Session. We are humbled by the kind sentiments expressed by so many Commissioners and other delegates, who told of the meaningful and enjoyable experiences they had.

We again express gratitude to Secretary General Almagro for his attendance and the inspirational remarks he offered during the inaugural session. I also wish to acknowledge CICAD's Executive Secretary, Ambassador Adam Namm for his support. While he was not in office at the time of the 60th Session, we made sure that he enjoyed some of the Bahamian experience during his official visits to The Bahamas in April and July of this year. Special thanks are also extended to CICAD's Assistant Secretary Ms. Angela Crowdy who provided superb guidance during the time leading up to and throughout our Chairmanship. Again, many thanks to each of you.

Ladies and gentlemen:

During our Chairmanship, a number of key actions in hemispheric drug control have been either achieved or launched. Key among the various achievements was the approval of the Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs 2016-2020, which provides a strategic framework for drug control strategies across the hemisphere over the next five years.

The 30th Anniversary of CICAD also took place during our Chairmanship. A Nassau Commemorative Declaration, which recognized the significant work undertaken by CICAD and its Executive Secretariat throughout the past three decades in strengthening the capacity of member States to address the world drug problem, was approved at the 60th Session to honor this milestone.

The drafting of the 7th Round Instrument of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), was also completed during our Chairmanship. This was done in fulfillment of the mandate issued by CICAD Commissioners during the 60th Session where the Inter-governmental Working Group (IWG) was asked to submit, for the

consideration of the Commission, components that constitute the evaluation process documents for the MEM's 7th evaluation Round. This process will be carried out based on the objectives of the Plan of Action, 2016-2020 of the CICAD Hemispheric Drug Strategy, on which member states will be evaluated.

The Bahamas has also achieved a number of local milestones in drug control during this period of Chairmanship. One such milestone was the completion of The Bahamas' National Household Drug Prevalence Survey Report 2017. CICAD funded this study in collaboration with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) of the United States Department of State. As with several other Member States, this Survey was a cross-sectional study using multi-stage sampling techniques, conducted using the CICAD's standardized household methodology. Running concurrently with this survey was a Rapid Situation Assessment which examined drugs and at-risk youth between ages 18-25 years.

I am sure all of you would agree that research affords us the ability to build knowledge, identify varying issues we did not know existed, and can give rise to questions we had not realized needed

asking. We note that, programs and policies that are guided and informed by evidence-based research are more likely to be effective to achieve desired goals. As a result of these studies, we are better able to improve our policies programs and services in drug control.

The Bahamas has also completed the drafting of its National Anti-Drug Strategy for 2017-2021. Our new Strategy was formulated with input from local drug control stakeholders. It is also strategically aligned with the Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs 2016-2020, the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and the operational recommendations contained in the final document of UNGASS 2016.

Ladies and gentlemen:

Notwithstanding all of the successes, accomplishments and progress that various regional, hemispheric and international drug control bodies have made, we remain cognizant of the fact that the drug problem remains a worldwide challenge. One of the

most pressing challenges involves opioids. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 64,000 people died in 2016 from drug overdoses, the majority of which were linked to opioids such as oxycodone, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and the illicit drug heroin. This past October, President Donald Trump declared the opioid addiction crisis a 'public health emergency'. This allowed for the quick hiring of personnel to deal with the issue, expanded access to telemedicine services, such as remote prescribing of medicine, and flexibility in use of grant money to combat the epidemic.

However, when one considers the massive impact that this and other drug abuse challenges has on health, citizen security, the environment, and the wellbeing of people, it is clear that in order to successfully combat this increasingly complex phenomenon, stakeholders must approach it through the principle of common and shared responsibility, which embraces a comprehensive, balanced, multidisciplinary, and sustainable strategy based on evidence and scientific knowledge and full respect for human rights.

Moreover, stakeholders are reminded of the multilateral consensus set down in the final UNGASS 2016 document, which recognizes that this problem remains a common, shared responsibility that has to be tackled in a multilateral way that encourages closer and more effective international cooperation and that demands an integrated, multidisciplinary, balanced, and broad approach, based on the scientific evidence and equipped with mutually reinforcing measures.

Ladies and gentlemen:

As The Bahamas concludes its Chairmanship, I wish to encourage all member states, esteemed observers, and special guests to again register your steadfast commitment toward continuing to address this harmful disease in a multidisciplinary and sustainable approach in alignment with the benchmarks of the rule of law and human rights.

As I conclude, I offer condolences to our friends and counterparts from Mexico as they continue to rebuild in the wake of a massive earthquake that occurred this past September. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and other Member States who have been impacted by recent tragedies.

Finally, please allow me to congratulate and wish every success to the incoming Chair and Vice Chair of CICAD. I give the full assurances that our Government remains a willing and committed partner and we are confident that the discussions at this Session will further chart the course of continued strengthening in drug control efforts across the globe.

It has been a distinct honor for The Bahamas to serve as Chair and lead CICAD's work during this period.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays to all, and thank you very much.