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**Report on Sub-Regional Meetings of National Drug Observatories in the
Caribbean and in Latin America**

64th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission

Report on Sub-Regional Meetings of National Drug Observatories in the Caribbean and in Latin America

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OAS/CICAD
11/19/2018



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Summary of Presentation

- Objectives and conclusions of the Regional Seminar for National Drug Observatories in the Caribbean
- Objectives and conclusions of the workshop for Latin American Observatories



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Seminar for Caribbean Observatories

- **The regional seminar for national drug observatories in the Caribbean** took place on April 4 and 5, 2018, in Georgetown, Guyana.
- Meeting was convened with support from Guyana and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat.



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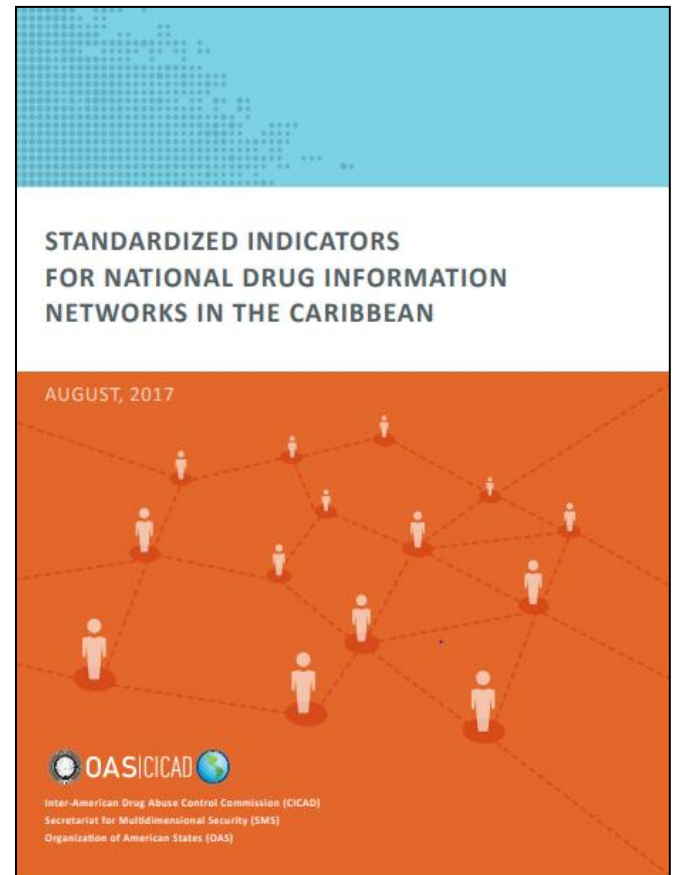


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Objectives:

- Present and discuss the results of household drug prevalence surveys undertaken recently in the Caribbean;
- Promote the manual, “**Standardized Indicators for National Drug Information Networks in the Caribbean**” and the accompanying data collection tools, and to discuss a pilot study of these indicators in selected countries.





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Objectives continued

- Receive updates on the progress of the COPOLAD working groups on early warning systems, annual reports, and problematic drug use scales;
- Discuss the status of the 2019 Report on Drug Use in the Americas;
- Discuss policy changes related to marijuana and their implications for research;
- Prepare a research agenda for the coming two-year period.



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Main Conclusions

- Only four observatories have done population based drug studies in the past two years. This is as a result of the fact that most drug related research done in the Caribbean is largely driven from the outside;
- Structures vary, but most observatories continue to be part of the national anti-drug commission;
- The role of national drug observatories in the policy making process needs to be strengthened;
- There is a need for training in communications strategies and the policy making process.



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Conclusions cont'd

- **New drug using behaviors include:**
 - Cold and cough syrup mixed with soda (lean)
 - synthetic marijuana
 - ‘molly’
 - ‘ecstasy’
 - mushrooms
 - Pharmaceutical abuse
 - marijuana infused pastries
 - formaldehyde-laced marijuana cigarettes
 - white rum mixed with tree barks and roots



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Conclusions cont'd

- Very few observatories are involved in the carrying out, or overseeing of evaluations of local programs or the setting up of monitoring systems (2 out of 13).
- Three countries have decriminalized marijuana: Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, and Belize. They allow small quantities for personal consumption and home growing.
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines is in the process of preparing a bill that allows for medical marijuana.



Conclusions cont'd

- There were requests by several countries for CICAD to provide more training opportunities for observatory personnel.





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Workshop for Latin American Drug Observatories

- The regional seminar for national drug observatories in Latin America took place on August 7 to 9, 2018, Antigua, Guatemala.
- The Meeting was convened in collaboration with the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (**AECID**).





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Objectives

- Discuss the implications of the new regulatory frameworks for drug research;
- Identify alternative research methods for the study of specific hard-to-reach populations;
- Examine the status of supply control indicators for the National Drug Observatories;
- Identify emerging drug problems in the Americas.



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Objectives continued

- Examine the role of the National Drug Observatories in the evaluation of programs and policies.
- Present concepts for Early Warning Systems (EWS').



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Conclusions

- Participants provided positive comments on an early draft of the Report on the Use of Drugs in the Americas 2019, while highlighting the quality of the analysis and suggesting that future reports should pay more attention to trends.
- There was agreement that the OIA should explore the development of new standardized protocols for studies among hard-to-reach populations.



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Conclusions

- It was recommended that research should be carried out that allows for the early identification and monitoring of new and emerging trends.
- More emphasis needs to be placed on supply control indicators.
- Participants highlighted the need for capacity building in epidemiological research and information systems.
- There was support for the development of a regional early warning system for the Americas.



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