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**INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE
CONTROL COMMISSION**

CICAD

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

**SIXTY-EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION OF CICAD
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**REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
COLOMBIA, CLAUDIA BLUM**



**Remarks by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of
Colombia, Claudia Blum**

**Inauguration of the Sixty-eighth Regular Session of the Inter-
American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD 68)**

Bogotá, December 9, 2020

Mr. Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the Organization of American
States

Mr. Arthur Weintraub, Secretary for Multidimensional Security of the
OAS

Mr. Adam Namm, Executive Secretary of the **Inter-American Drug
Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)**

Ms. Kirsten Madison, President of CICAD

Mr. Javier Augusto Sarmiento Olarte, Deputy Minister of Criminal
Policy and Restorative Justice of Colombia and Vice President of
CICAD

Ambassador Marcela Ordoñez, Deputy Minister responsible for
Multilateral Affairs of Colombia

CICAD commissioners

Delegations of the OAS Member States

Representatives of the Permanent Observers to the OAS,
international organizations, and civil society



Staff of the OAS and of CICAD

Members of the diplomatic corps accredited in Colombia

Representatives of our Colombian Security Forces and government officials.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to our country.

On behalf of the Government of President Iván Duque, I would like to thank those of you who are with us today in Bogotá and those of you who are joining us virtually from each of your countries, for accepting this invitation.

The global drug problem is wreaking havoc with the social fabric in our Hemisphere, triggering violence, terrorism, corruption, and the destruction of ecosystems.

It is a scourge, posing huge challenges for security and the rule of law. The criminals and organized armed groups running this activity attack both urban and rural communities and threaten our freedoms and institutions.

In addition, drug trafficking and the illegal economies it spawns undermine our health, social development, and well-being. The processes used to produce narcotics and psychotropic substances have numerous, devastating effects on the environment; cause the deforestation of hundreds of thousands of hectares in our jungles; and lead to chemical spills that damage soils, poison rivers and wells, and diminish biological diversity.



No country is spared the pernicious effects of illegal drug trafficking and the multiple manifestations of transnational crime associated with it.

For that reason, the principle of joint and shared responsibility, espoused by the United Nations in 1998, is as valid today as it ever was.

Colombia appreciates the efforts being made by each State in the region and by CICAD to bolster the capacity of national authorities to address the challenges posed by this phenomenon.

It is well worth recalling that there is a global consensus on the need to confront this problem, with actions tailored to its different facets.

It is vital to strengthen cooperation and coordination when it comes to formulating, executing, monitoring, and evaluating drug policies. At the same time, those policies need to continue to be tied in with other public policies to advance justice, efforts to combat transnational crime, health, education, development, and equity.

Distinguished participants:

In our current context, the COVID-19 pandemic is forcing our nations to adapt and deal with this new reality.

COVID-19 has heavily impacted our health systems and triggered economic and social consequences we will be facing for several years.



The illicit drug economy is no exception. Criminal organizations have generated new challenges to the security and well-being of our citizens.

The restrictions on the movement of goods and persons imposed by States during this emergency have diminished access to precursors and chemical substances. Nevertheless, drug production chains have devised new ways to manufacture drugs and traffickers have established alternative routes and distribution methods. Drug trafficking has not stopped, despite the pandemic.

With unemployment rising and other effects of the economic crisis, there is now an increased risk of vulnerable persons succumbing to harmful, illicit drug-use habits. There is even a risk that more individuals get caught up in the illegal activities associated with drugs and are used by drug trafficking organizations.

In such a scenario, governments' capacity to respond needs boosting. It is our duty to strengthen policies and strategies to deal with new, emerging circumstances.

For the next three days, we will share visions, experiences, and best practices for addressing the new challenges. They include virtual micro-trafficking and new trends in illicit drug trafficking on the high seas, on land, and in the air. We will also embark on a dialogue with civil society regarding the challenges we face with respect to the goal



of reducing demand for drugs in the COVID-19 context. In addition, we will explore mechanisms for bolstering multi-actor initiatives, linking and encompassing civil society, the public and private sectors, and the international community. I trust that this dialogue will be fruitful and lead to a comprehensive and pluralist vision of what is needed.

I celebrate the fact that we member states of CIDAD reached consensus during this regular session to adopt the new Hemispheric Drug Strategy and its 2021-2025 Plan of Action.

Still ahead is the task of aligning our National Strategies with the Hemispheric Strategy, which we will achieve with technical support from CICAD.

Colombia reaffirms its unwavering commitment to continue contributing to the struggle against the Global Drug Problem. We are grateful to have been entrusted with the Presidency of CICAD in 2020- 2021.

We hope to work with all the member states of CICAD to consolidate cooperation and pursue the joint, innovative actions we need to become more and more effective in achieving the purposes that unite us for the well-being of our peoples.

Thank you very much.



**El futuro
es de todos**

**Cancillería
de Colombia**