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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 JUSTICE AND LAW OF COLOMBIA, WILSON
RUÍZ**



SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND LAW OF COLOMBIA, WILSON RUÍZ OREJUELA, DURING THE SIXTY-EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE INTER- AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION

December 9, 2020, Bogotá

- **Mr. Arthur Weintraub**, Secretary for Multidimensional Security of the OAS
- **Ambassador Adam Namm**, Executive Secretary of CICAD
- **Ms. Kirsten Madison**, Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, at the Department of State of the United States. President of CICAD
- **Mr. Javier Augusto Sarmiento Olarte**, Deputy Minister of Criminal Policy and Restorative Justice of the Ministry of Justice and Law of Colombia
- **Ambassador Alejandro Ordoñez Maldonado**, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the OAS
- **Ambassador José Renato Salazar Acosta**, Director of Multilateral Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia
- Commissioners of the Member States of CICAD
- Delegates of the Permanent Observers to the OAS, international organizations, and civil society
- Members of the diplomatic corps accredited in Colombia
- Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to Bogotá.

We thank you for kindly taking part, in person and virtually, in this important meeting under today's "new normal" circumstances.

I would like to begin by thanking the delegation of the United States for its hard work and tireless effort during the sixty-seventh session. For Colombia it was a pleasure to work with you. Under your leadership, we were able to overcome the challenges posed for this Commission by the pandemic and forge ahead with a new Hemispheric Drugs Strategy and other major matters.

Naturally, I would also like to send a very special greeting and express my gratitude to the team at the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, who have managed to adapt and continue to support member states in the quest for more effective and sustainable drug policies under these new circumstances.

For me it is an honor to address this Commission as Chair and as the representative of the Government of Colombia given that the position undoubtedly reflects recognition of the effort and sacrifices made by all Colombians to address this issue.

We feel highly honored to have been elected and will work hard to ensure that this session lives up to the challenges posed by the hemispheric drugs agenda.

Colombia's principal objective under the Government of President Iván Duque Márquez is to build a more equitable country, rooted in the rule of law and collective endeavor. With that in mind, we have focused our Comprehensive Policy for Addressing the Drugs Problem on what we call the Road Ahead ("Ruta Futura") and its Plan of Action.



These documents and policies together constitute the National Government's roadmap to guide the actions we take to achieve a sustainable reduction of the drug problems we face in Colombia, while, at the same time, coordinating the security, environmental, health, childhood, education, money-laundering, and other agendas.

By pursuing this policy, our country had not just achieved significant results; it has also reversed some major trends that were part of the problem.

Here, I would just like to draw attention to a few of those achievements:

1. President Duque's Government has finally managed to stop the growth trend in coca crops. We have gone from 169,000 hectares in 2018 to 154,000 at December 31, 2019, a 9% reduction, according to the Integrated Illicit Crop Monitoring System (SIMCI).
2. We have also bolstered control measures, resulting in record high seizures of chemical precursors, including more than 14 million (14,397,805) gallons of liquid chemical substances and almost 80,000 (79,233) tons of solid substances.
3. Synergies between the competent authorities for land-related, environmental, and alternative development matters have resulted in ongoing administrative processes and actions geared to comprehensive treatment of the difficulties faced by special management zones impacted by illicit crops.

These are just some of the fruits of our efforts that prompt me to reiterate today our commitment to addressing and countering the drugs problem in the Americas based on the principle of joint and shared responsibility.

Ladies and Gentlemen,



We acknowledge the work done to reduce demand, strengthen institutions, reduce supply, address maritime trafficking, and monitor chemical substances, along with numerous other achievements. As Chair, I would like to thank you and pay tribute to those efforts.

For all of the above reasons, for as long as Colombia is Chair, we will continue to foster discussion of these issues that is conscious of the complexity and multiple facets of the problem, so that those discussions translate into effective actions with a greater impact for the region.

During our term, we also want to encourage the sharing of experiences and more in-depth generation of knowledge. We are convinced that it is only through convergence, coordination, and synchronization, that we will manage to develop increasingly comprehensive and effective strategies, based on technical and scientific evidence, with an inclusive and differential perspective. In short, we are bent on achieving participatory, sustainable, flexible, and, of course, innovative strategies.

Thus, our work will focus on a permanent quest for novel and flexible ideas, in sync with the revolution in information and connectivity that our region, too, is embracing.

We also trust that the Strategy adopted today will translate into an opportunity to tap into, boost, and increase coherent cooperation and coordination at every level in the region.

Naturally, and as always, we hope for the substantive support and technical assistance of the Executive Secretariat of CICAD, which is ever mindful of our needs and priorities as States addressing this problem.



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Finally, I wish you all productive days of dialogue and debate conducive to forging ever more robust and effective policies.

It goes without saying, too, that we hope you can enjoy our capital as much as possible in the circumstances, responsibly, and complying with all biosecurity safeguards.

Thank you very much.