



Ministry of National Security  
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Statement by  
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Minister of National Security

# Dissemination Meeting for the Bahamas National Drug Household Survey

20<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

Ambassador Adam Namm, Executive Secretary CICAD, Mr. Pernell Clarke and other CICAD Secretariat Staffers, Ms. Lisa Johnson, Charge d’Affaires, United States Embassy, Bahamas, Mrs. Jamie Martin, Director of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Parliamentary colleagues, Ministry of Health Officials, other special guests, and stakeholders, Good Morning.

In today’s world we are constantly adapting and demanding new things and new ways to do new things. Research affords us the ability to build knowledge, it assists in identify varying issues we did not know existed and can gives rise to questions we had not realized needed asking. Moreover, programs and policies that are guided and informed by scholarly research are more likely to be effective to achieved desired goals.

It is clear, that we have reached a point in time where civil society demands that programs and initiatives be supported by clear empirical evidence. With limited resources available for funding criminal justice initiatives, understanding how to identify and implement evidence based practices will be critical for decision makers in all areas of the justice system in The Bahamas.

Over the past four (4) decades The Bahamas has been on the frontline of drug control reduction efforts, committing continually to weakening illicit drug enterprises that exist regionally. Since assuming the role of Chair for the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States in November 2016, we have undertaken a leading role through cooperation and capacity building along with major counterparts and key stakeholders.

The Bahamas is situated between the illicit drug production centres in Central and South America and the Caribbean, and illegal drug markets within major cities of North America and Europe. Popular narcotics such cocaine and marijuana which are produced in the region, are the principle drugs in the transshipment process into and through our archipelagic islands. As these signature drugs make their way to our streets, crime and violence are its bi-products.

As in other nations in the hemisphere, The Bahamas face similar social ills and the reality that laws and regulations alone do not always correct social behaviour. The need to address contributing factors is essential to socio-economic growth and community development.

We are pleased today that through the assistance of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS), The Bahamas' national drug household survey was conducted to identify the level of drug prevalence throughout our communities.

Collaborations such as this strengthen bilateral and multi-agency relationships and efforts. This dissemination event represents what is best when each of us partner and work together in combating the illicit trade and the abuse of drugs. Together we weaken the far-reaching impact of drugs among the most vulnerable communities.

The Bahamas National Drug Household Survey project is the first step of many initiatives which will ensure that national drug and crime control strategies are properly designed, implemented, and monitored.

There are a number of other initiatives that are in progress which are also geared to addressing the drug problem including the Citizen Security and Justice Program. Key among the project's objectives is the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders, including those serving time for drug related offences. In

addition, The Bahamas is also in the process of establishing a Drug Treatment Court as well as a Probation & Parole System to provide alternatives to incarceration for drug-dependent offenders through treatment and offender management.

Moving forward, there will be other research initiatives including the National School Drug Survey, which is slated to begin during the Fall School Term in 2017. This survey will be the fourth in a series of studies conducted using the methodology devised by the Inter-American Drug Control Commission (CICAD). The first survey was completed in 2002 and the others in 2008 and 2012 respectively. Like the outcomes before, the survey will measure the drug prevalence level and trends among Bahamian secondary students.

Throughout the course of today's activities, we anticipate that the information shared from this study will be useful in modernizing and strengthening drug prevention programs equipped to address the challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Finally, I give the full assurances of our Government remains a willing and committed partner and we are confident that underpinning the discussions at this dissemination meeting is the

revolve to improve and formulate data, charting the course of response to findings about drug abuse and its influence on our society.

Thank you.