

**SIXTY-SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE
INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL
COMMISSION (CICAD),
SECRETARIAT FOR MULTIDIMENSIONAL SECURITY
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS)**

DIALOGUE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

**HARM REDUCTION: GOOD PRACTICES, AREAS
OF OPPORTUNITY AND NEW CONCEPTUAL
APPROACHES**

Following the operational recommendations of UNGASS 2016

December 13, 2017

**Padilha Vidal Room, GSB OAS
Washington D.C. 12:00-15:00**



OAS | CICAD



Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas

The 54th regular session of CICAD/OAS held in Bogota, Colombia in 2013 marked the initiation of civil society dialogues. This practice has continued in subsequent CICAD sessions. While they are not part of the CICAD Regular Sessions, and not binding in character for the Commission, these dialogues undoubtedly serve as a mechanism for presenting promising experiences, actions, and investigations undertaken by civil society actors, as well as encouraging feedback and exchange of ideas. In this way, these sessions aim to promote and strengthen the relationship between Commissioners and civil society, as well as supporting the corresponding discussions and follow-up actions in the CICAD framework. The content of these sessions does not necessarily reflect the position of the OAS or the governments and institutions that sponsor these sessions.

HARM REDUCTION: GOOD PRACTICES, AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY AND NEW CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES

Following the operational recommendations of UNGASS 2016

The UNGASS 2016 endorsed the commitment of the international community to adopt more humane drug policies, based on evidence and respectful of public health and human rights approaches. Under its heading "Operational recommendations on demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as other health-related issues," its outcome document implicitly recognizes the harm reduction approach as a legitimate measure to address health issues and asks Member States to utilize this approach in addressing specific problems such as overdoses of opioids (authorizing, among other actions, the administration of Naloxone).

The same document recommends considering, among national drug strategies and programs, effective measures aimed at minimizing the adverse consequences of drug use, including medication-assisted therapy programs, those related to injection equipment, and other interventions aimed at preventing the transmission of HIV, viral hepatitis and other diseases related to drug use.

With the aim of contributing to the fulfillment of these recommendations, the civil society organizations and academic institutions present in this dialogue will share their knowledge and practical experience to demonstrate that harm reduction is not only a useful theoretical approach to guide government efforts in drugs and health, but also provides a set of proven tools to improve the quality of life and survival of people who use drugs, as well as to ensure unrestricted respect for their human rights.

In a very schematic way, the discussion will revolve around the following questions:

1. What are the lessons learned and good practices that harm reduction as an intervention can offer public health services in the timely and effective management of situations such as the opioid crisis in North America and the increase in the use of smokable cocaine in Latin America?
2. Are there areas of opportunity for harm reduction that have not been explored on a large scale and that can serve to bring more and better services to the community, in particular to specific populations such as young people?
3. Can the harm reduction approach also be applied to other aspects of drug policy outside drug use and the prevention of communicable diseases?

AGENDA

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

12:00 – **Welcome**

12:10 – Participants take their seats (boxed lunch provided)

12:10 – **Opening Remarks**

- 12:20
- **Lisa Sánchez**, *México Unido Contra la Delincuencia*, on behalf of participating civil society organizations
 - **Claudia Paz y Paz**, Secretary for Multidimensional Security, OAS
 - Explanation of session methodology

12:20 – **Panel I: Different harms, different answers**

13:20 **Moderator:** **Lisa Sánchez**, *México Unido Contra la Delincuencia* (MUCD)

- Effective Responses to the Opiate Crisis. **Dan Werb**, International Centre for Science in Drug Policy (ICS DP), Canada.
- Harm Reduction for and with Users of Smokable Cocaine. **Ernesto Cortés**, *La Asociación Costarricense para el Estudio e Intervención en Drogas* (ACEID), Costa Rica.
- Harm Reduction in Party Environments. **Stefanie Jones**, Drug Policy Alliance, United States.

13:20 – **Questions and Answers, Panel I**

13:40

13:40 – **Panel II: Rethinking Harm Reduction**


14:40 **Moderator:** **Coletta Youngers**, Washington Office on Latin America

- Current Debates on Harm Reduction in Latin America. **Pablo Cymerman**, *Intercambios*, Argentina.
- Providers and Beneficiaries: Harm Reduction from the Perspective of People who Use Drugs. **Miss Ian**, San Francisco Drug Users Union, United States.
- Harm Reduction as a Prevention Tool. **Rafael Torruela**, *Intercambios* Puerto Rico.

14:40 – **Questions and Answers, Panel II**

15:00

15:00 **Closing remarks**

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