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## **The Organisation of American States launches study on drug policy**

**Bogota, Colombia**—On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May, the Secretary General of the Organisation of American States (OEA), José Miguel Insulza, will meet with Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos to share the results of the hemispheric review of drug policies. This task was entrusted to him by the Heads of States of the Americas at the Sixth Americas Summit held in Cartagena, Colombia.

**The members of the [International Drug Policy Consortium](http://www.idpc.net) (IDPC) in Latin America welcome the launch of the study and recognise that it will be essential to enrich the hemispheric debate around regional alternatives to current drug policies.**

***Representatives from the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) are currently in Bogotá and are available to offer comments on the study.***

The study is comprised of two main parts:

1. An *analytical report*, looking at current trends, practices, and policy challenges; and
2. A *scenarios report*, considering possibilities for alternative regulatory models that could be developed by 2025. **Legally regulated drugs markets are considered as a policy option in the proposed scenarios.**

Lisa Sanchez, Coordinator of Drug Policies at Transform Drug Policy Foundation and *Mexico Unido contra la Delincuencia*, participated in the working group that prepared the scenarios

report. She explains that: “As part of the scenarios team, we worked to make it clear that another reality is indeed possible, that our countries can move orderly toward regulated drugs markets, and that there are possibilities to achieve better results. It is clear that the State should no longer ignore its responsibility to guarantee the health and security of all its citizens, and to do this, it needs to regain control over the drug markets which are currently illegal”.

The report is particularly important because it was requested by Heads of States and governments in the Americas, and contains, for first time, findings and scenarios that consider the legal regulation of drug markets as a real and desirable policy option. The drafting of the report sought to be diverse and to address the multiple concerns of countries regarding the production, transit and use of drugs in the Americas (for more information, please read the [Civil society declaration to inform the General Assembly](#)).

In order to fulfil its objective, it is necessary that the report be discussed seriously in wide forums at national and regional level. It will also need to be considered by the ministries of foreign relations at the next OAS General Assembly that will take place in Antigua, Guatemala, on 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> June, entitled “*Toward a comprehensive anti-drug policy in the Americas*”

Finally, it is essential that the conclusions of the report feed into the discussions of the Special Session of OAS General Assembly, which is expected to be held in February 2014, as well as at the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on drugs in 2016.

According to Pablo Cymerman, Advocacy Coordinator of A.C. Intercambios based in Buenos Aires, “The critical situation that our countries are facing because of the strict application of punitive drug policies has highlighted the urgency of exploring alternative approaches to drug policies, which can tackle in a pragmatic way a phenomenon that should be managed (rather than eradicated), by using a health and human rights perspective. The first step that should be undertaken to achieve this objective is to distinguish the harms associated with drug use, from the harms caused by actual policies”.

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*The International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC) is a global network of [100 NGOs and professional networks](#) that promotes objective and open debate on the effectiveness, direction and content of national and international drug policies, and supports humane and evidence-based policies that are effective in reducing drug-related harm. [Click here to see a list of IDPC members in Latin America.](#)*