



Lima, June 2013

For the past few years, civil society in the American region<sup>1</sup> has attached great importance to ensuring a fruitful and efficient collaboration in order to impact our governments, the International Drug System, and ... the OAS.

And we did win a very serious battle! After obtaining such as a burning issue as the War on Drugs to figure on the General Assembly's agenda, we went even further. We obtained a special mention of our position in the OAS report and in the Declaration, we were there at the Event (this participation actually happens to be the biggest participation of civil society in the OAS in the history, with more than 300 representatives). And, last but not least, our collective letter was mentioned by President Perez Molina himself. We can really say we have reached a significant step ahead and can be proud of ourselves. However, it is needless to say that, as big as this battle is, it is still just a battle, and that war is not yet to be over, particularly in México, Colombia and Central America. We need to put in practice, soon any particular experience of change and reform. Ecuadorian and Bolivian high officials have recently declared to be in favor of discussing alternative approaches.

We, at the Investigation Center on Drugs and Human Rights, think we need to be prepared to send our best horses to the coming events such as the OAS General Special Assembly in 2014 and the next UNGASS which will be held in 2016. We are planning on getting the right answer from our regional leaders, and would very much like to reap fair rewards of our hard work on the international level. For that, we feel the urge to set our goals for the near future:

- ✚ We need to understand that the next Extraordinary General Assembly to be organized in 2014 will be the one that will open many doors and is the main event we need to focus on. Therefore, we need to **develop the recommendations we presented for the civil society draft into even concrete suggestions.**
- ✚ We should come up with **realistic solutions** for our countries and present **drafts to strengthen our public health systems, promote peace, security and democracy, fight against money laundering, precursors at the highest level of the ladder, and arm**

---

<sup>1</sup> IDPC, CEDD, Intercambios, De Justicia, CIDDH, WOLa, TNI.

**trafficking. We need to make sure debates will turn soon into concrete measures and not just empty words.**

- ✚ We need **to raise awareness in our countries and strengthen partnership with key domestic figures**. Some of their citizens are the prisoners of weak and manipulative media systems, which often spread wrong sources, alarm and manipulate public discourse on drugs.... and don't enjoy as much freedom as they should in the determination process of their opinion.
- ✚ We should collaborate to organize thematic workshops (seminars and conferences, open and close meetings) with different social and political actors, especially in Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, organize long-lasting relationships with the Academic World and try to open as many doors as possible in our governments.
- ✚ We now have understood who our allies are, and which countries will be the biggest challenges and we need to work strategically in accordance to this reality. We also **need to advocate altogether strongly in order to influence** those who are struggling to position themselves, through diplomatic efforts:

Brazil is now one of the biggest economic powers in the region, but is also suffering from a massive crack epidemic all over the country, deals with a huge zone without any State control, and sees every year the apparition of a new problematic substance. Brazil seems to be torn between two tactics: over militarization, investing each year more budget on state-of-the-art intelligence tools and eradicating *cracolândias* by force, and steps towards a more proportional system, as discussed currently in the penal code reform context. We need to make sure interesting proposals discussed in State/Federal Assemblies reach a concrete impact, as most of the time they don't reach debate level at the government and don't give the opportunity for executive possibilities.

The US are now facing a serious challenge: two states have declared legal the personal use of Marijuana, however, the Central Government is not close to following their steps. It appears critical to help local NGOs to push the Government in the right direction, for obvious reasons related to the hegemonic position of the US in the region.

It would be a huge mistake to put aside some of Caribbean most conservative states, as we shouldn't forget that, no matter how small they seem, they are numerous and hold a vote as important as any of other countries. We should include them in our debate, connect with them, open the debate and try to influence them.

Countries against any law reform in the region are the ones with biggest crime rates in the world. Their stubborn attitude is putting the regional system in danger. It appears as necessary to open the debate with civil society in this region, to help them develop a way to force the government to

make a move. We should pay special attention to Venezuela, which is famous for hosting some of the worst prisons in the region<sup>2</sup>, and is playing a very tricky game on the international scene.

Let's hope that, through our good work, we can diminish the number of opponents, and turn them into priceless partners.

As a quick reminder, here is a recapitulation on some of the tendencies we can observe in the Region:

Countries willing to change the system	Uruguay	Guatemala	Costa Rica		
Unsure, but close	Mexico	Colombia	Argentina	Chile	Bolivia/Ecuador
Unsure, but far	Jamaica	US <sup>3</sup>	Canada		
Countries unwilling to change the system	Venezuela	Nicaragua	Panama	Other Caribbean countries	El Salvador

Finally, we would like to thank all of you for the efforts that have been made and look forward to hearing from you very soon, in order to start our further collaboration on the matter.

**The Investigation Center on Drugs and Human Rights' Team (CIDDH)**

---

<sup>2</sup><http://lightbox.time.com/2013/06/06/on-the-inside-venezuelas-most-dangerous-prison/#1>

<sup>3</sup>Even though the 2013 National Drug Control Strategy published last April stresses the importance to consider drug related problems as a Public Health issue, and even though Obama's administration seems to have tone it down a little about Washington and Colorado's legalization, we'd like to draw public attention on the fact that the country still pushes hardly on militarization as its major tactics, as it can be seen through the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act, the 26.7mio US\$ invested in militarization efforts from the US government and the formalization of a politico-military treaty between the two parties.