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MEETING ON EXPERIENCES IN ADDRESSING DRUG-RELATED VULNERABILITIES IN THE TERRITORY CARRIED OUT IN THE SCOPE OF COPOLAD III 25-27 MARCH 2025. PORT OF SPAIN – TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

COPOLAD III Component on improved coherence, balance and quality of policies related to drug use: Territorializing prevention, comprehensive care, and harm reduction programs and services

Concept Note

1. BACKGROUND

COPOLAD is an international cooperation programme, funded by the European Union, which since 2011 promotes technical dialogue on drug policy between Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe. It aims to achieve more humane and effective policies through collaboration, dialogue, and mobilisation of public expertise between the two regions. One of COPOLAD's expected results is to improve the coherence, balance and quality of policies related to drug use.

COPOLAD III supports the Latin American and The Caribbean region (LAC) to improve the quality, effectiveness and evidenced base of policies related to drug use, as well as the availability and access to interventions and services, through dialogue, cooperation and technical assistance based on the needs of the countries. Thus, enhancing the relevance and comprehensiveness of public policies on drug use. COPOLAD III focuses on the most vulnerable populations to develop systems and interventions to support the most vulnerable and populations with the most difficulties in accessing care services:

- Work is being done to improve attention for both women and vulnerable populations.
- Emphasis is placed on the attention of social vulnerabilities linked to problematic drug use in the territory, especially in areas that present characteristics of high vulnerability, partly linked to the participation of people in the illicit economy of micro-trafficking or in situations of problematic drug use.
- Finally, the programme is committed to the development of national systems for social and labour inclusion of people with drug use problems, connecting the therapeutic processes of the care networks with tools that consolidate the circle of recovery and facilitate the cost-effectiveness of care interventions.

Regarding this territorial line of action emphasis is placed on addressing social vulnerabilities linked to problematic drug use in the territory, especially in areas that present characteristics of high vulnerability, partly linked to the participation of people in problematic drug use or in the illicit economy of micro-trafficking. In this sense, work will be carried out along these complementary lines:

- A commitment has been made to scale up to public policies interventions based on the community treatment model, especially developed to intervene, from the communities themselves, in areas of high vulnerability with drug problems.
- Multidimensional/integrated intervention models are being addressed in areas of high vulnerability.

Drug micro-trafficking generates problems in vulnerable territories, characterised by the disarticulation or limitation of care mechanisms aimed at women, young people, migrants or people deprived of their liberty. In this context, COPOLAD III has established an alliance with civil society to address these vulnerabilities at territorial level in the field of care and prevention of drug use.

Specialised technical assistance is provided by the American Network of Interventions in Situations of Social Suffering (RAISSS). From a multi-actor and multi-level approach, the Programme is committed to generating capacities at territorial and community level. This approach translates into the search for synergies between existing programmes and services, in order to create a care system that is embedded in the territory and the community.

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2. ACTUAL SITUATION

The progress made by COPOLAD III to date:

From a multi-country regional perspective, the work has been centred on the capacity building for community intervention in vulnerable territories. The following progress has been made:

- 1) COPOLAD has conducted a formal training on territorialised community intervention, in virtual format, aimed at technical staff of public institutions and civil society. 129 people from 17 countries have obtained a training certificate.
- 2) International Forum on 'Drugs, vulnerabilities and urban territories' (Fortaleza, April 2023). 25 good practices from 21 countries were exchanged around seven areas of analysis: drugs and migration, street life, care services, gender and intercultural, social and/or economic inclusion, comprehensive interventions in the territory and territorial networks of social and health services.
- 3) Elaboration of a Guide for tackling drug-related social vulnerabilities, with the support of the Ibero-American Network of NGOs working on Drugs and Addictions (RIOD), which includes a conceptualisation, a comparative EU-LAC analysis of intervention models and a catalogue of territorialisation indicators. It incorporates 21 good practices (16 LAC and EU countries).
- 4) Promotion of pilot territorialisation projects in vulnerable territories.
- 5) Visits to ensure the territorialisation process and provide on-site training for the teams of the following countries: Bahamas, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and Belize.
- 6) Internships for the territorialisation process in 2024, in Brazil (August), Portugal (October) and Colombia (December).

At national level, COPOLAD III is promoting pilot projects in 12 countries in the region, based on 14 national actions: Bahamas, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Peru, Dominican Republic, Suriname, Uruguay, Trinidad and Tobago.

3. PROGRAMMING 2025

During 2025 COPOLAD is working in the following areas on territorialisation:

- **Working group meetings for:**
 - 1) The presentation of the Good Practice Guide and the call for countries to start advisory activities.
 - 2) The Follow-up of the advisory process, internships and delivery of Roadmap products; preparation for the final meeting and post-advisory commitments (publications).
- **Accompaniment and technical assistance** to countries with national actions approved and under implementation.
- **Training of local advisors.** There will be a training for local advisors to outline expectations and deliverables.
- **ECO2 micro-training in the Caribbean.**
- **Face-to-face meeting in Trinidad and Tobago.**

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4. FACE-TO-FACE MEETING IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Date: 25 to 27 March 2025

Venue: The BRIX, Autograph Collection. 2-4 Coblenz Avenue, Cascade, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. <https://www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/posak-the-brix-autograph-collection/overview/>

Participants: Representatives from Bahamas, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Peru, Dominican Republic, Portugal, Spain, Suriname, Uruguay, Trinidad and Tobago. COPOLAD III, FIIAPP. Other stakeholders.

Objectives of the meeting

- Promote the exchange of plans, good practices and challenges of the territorialisation programmes in the different countries with which COPOLAD III has worked in the line of action of addressing vulnerabilities associated with drugs at the territorial level, highlighting the participation and tools used in the Caribbean.
- Presentation of the work carried out by the teams in each country, their territorialisation plan and how it has been or will be included in the national drug policies.
- Training and capacity building models for professionals and community leaders will be presented, and continuity processes will be defined.
- Build a proposal for a network collaboration between countries in order to generate continuity and sustainability.
- Reinforcing territorialisation and inclusion.

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