

## Meeting of National Drug Observatories

### ***“National Drug Observatories Facing New Global Challenges: Towards a Joint EU–CELAC Evidence-Based Response”***

Mexico City, Mexico, September 11–12, 2025.

Venue: NH Collection Mexico City Centro Histórico.

#### **Context and Relevance**

The global dynamics of drug markets—ever more diversified, interconnected, and featuring the presence of new psychoactive substances—pose unprecedented challenges for public health, security, and social cohesion. We are witnessing increased availability and use of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, alongside traditional drugs, together with the expansion of illicit markets in digital environments and the use of the internet for distribution. Added to this are environmental impacts, violence associated with drug trafficking, and related offenses such as money laundering and trafficking in firearms. New patterns of use are also emerging, linked to mental-health issues, social vulnerabilities, and structural inequalities, which calls for comprehensive, evidence-based responses across health, security, and social-policy domains.

Drug policies therefore face the challenge of responding with agility and effectiveness in a changing context while ensuring a balanced approach. In this scenario, National Drug Observatories (NDOs) are essential to provide scientific, comparable, and up-to-date information that underpins strategic decision-making, makes it possible to anticipate trends, and prepares us to respond to new threats.

In much of Latin America and the Caribbean, NDOs and their information and early-warning systems have made significant progress in recent years thanks to strengthened technical capacities, the adoption of common methodologies, and growing international cooperation. Nonetheless, important challenges persist, such as fragmentation and heterogeneity in data sources; insufficient integration of data from different sectors (health, security, justice, social policy); lack of specialized technical and human resources; and constraints on producing forward-looking analysis and systematic policy evaluations.

#### **Objectives of the Meeting**

The European Union programme COPOLAD III, led by FIAP in consortium with IILA and in partnership with EUDA and GIZ, advances drug policies that are more humane, effective, and evidence-based. Within this framework, one of its priority lines of work is to strengthen National Drug Observatories (NDOs), promoting their technical and institutional development to improve the generation, analysis, and use of information as a basis for decision-making.

Within this framework, and as the culmination of almost five years of joint work, the meeting “National Drug Observatories Facing New Global Challenges: Towards a Joint EU–CELAC Evidence-Based Response,” organized by FIAP in collaboration with Mexico’s National Commission for Mental Health and Addictions (CONASAMA), will be held. The event will bring



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together NDOs from 20 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, together with Spain, France, Portugal, Poland, and Ireland, as well as strategic organizations such as EUDA, the CICAD-OAS, and UNODC.

This meeting is an opportunity to share achievements, lessons learned, and experiences, as well as to jointly define future cooperation priorities. It seeks to consolidate a shared vision of the role of NDOs as pillars of evidence-based drug policies; to strengthen technical and operational cooperation between countries and regions; and to lay the foundations for a possible COPOLAD top-up aimed at addressing emerging challenges through coordinated, inclusive, and sustainable solutions.

The purpose is aligned with the La Paz Declaration (2024) of the EU–CELAC Mechanism, which underscores the need to reinforce NDOs and generate robust scientific evidence as the foundation for comprehensive, balanced, and human-rights-based policies.

## **Agenda**

**11 September**

**8:00–9:00** Registration

**9:00–9:30** Opening Table

Master of Ceremonies: Dr. Eloy Ordaz Ávila, Head of the Care Unit

Authorities:

- Dr. Ramiro López Elizalde, Undersecretary for Health Policy and Population Well-Being
- Mtro. Francisco José Gutiérrez Rodríguez, National Commissioner for Mental Health and Addictions
- Representative of the EU Delegation to Mexico
- Borja Díaz Rivillas – Director of COPOLAD III
- Cécile Martel, Head of International Cooperation Sector in the Partnerships and Innovation Unit of the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA)

Group photo

**09:40–10:10** Opening Keynote: “Towards Stronger and More Effective National Drug Observatories. Lessons from COPOLAD.”

Graciela Ahumada, COPOLAD III Task Force at FIAP

**10:10–10:30** Coffee Break

**10:30–12:00** Roundtable. The Role of National Drug Observatories in the Face of Current Challenges: Perspectives from International Organizations and Agencies

Session objectives:



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- Present an up-to-date diagnosis of the main challenges facing National Drug Observatories (NDOs).
- Share the perspectives and experiences of international organizations and agencies in generating, analyzing, and strategically using data.
- Identify opportunities for international cooperation to strengthen NDOs' technical capacities and sustainability.

Moderator: Dr. Lucía Ledesma Torres, Director-General for Policies on Mental Health and Addictions, CONASAMA, Mexico

#### Speakers

- Pernell Clarke, Research Specialist, Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID), Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)
- Juan Ricardo Gómez-Hecht, Regional Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, UNODC Global SMART Programme
- Cécile Martel, Head of International Cooperation Sector in the Partnerships and Innovation Unit, European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA)

#### Open discussion

**12:00–13:30** Lessons from the Dialogue between Research and Drug Policy: Impact of Scientific Networks and National Research Agendas

#### Objectives

- Explore innovative approaches to integrate scientific evidence into drug policies amid changing and complex contexts.
- Strengthen the role of scientific networks and national agendas as catalysts for disruptive and sustainable solutions.
- Promote strategic alliances that enhance the capacity to respond to new challenges in drugs and mental health.

Moderator: Fabio Costa de Souza, Coordinator, Brazilian Drug Observatory, Brazil

#### Speakers

- Nadja Porcel, Coordinator, Panamanian Drug Observatory
- Sabrina Rootharam, Statistical Researcher, Executive Office of the National Anti-Drug Council, Ministry of Health, Suriname
- Keel County, Programme Officer, Secretariat of the National Drug Council, Trinidad and Tobago
- Brian Galvin, Head of the Irish National Focal Point

#### Open discussion

**13:30–15:00** Lunch Break

**15:00–16:30** Information Networks and Inter-Institutional and Territorial Coordination: Innovative Experiences in the Generation, Analysis, and Dissemination of Drug Data

#### Objectives

- Show how networks strengthen the generation, analysis, and dissemination of information on drugs.
- Present innovative experiences in inter-institutional and territorial coordination.
- Share good practices and tools that can be transferred to different contexts.

Moderator: Carmen Borrego, National Drug Observatory, Cuba

#### Speakers

- Salvador Parra, Director of Development of Mental Health Care Models and Coordinator of the Mexican Observatory of Mental Health and Addictions
- Daniel Pech, Associate of the Mexican Observatory of Mental Health and Addictions
- María Begoña Brime Beteta, Director, Spanish Observatory on Drugs and Addictions, Spain
- Carine Mutatayi, Scientific Analyst, French Observatory of Drugs and Drug Trends, France

#### Open discussion

**16:30–17:30** Inclusive Evidence: Integrating Rights and Gender in National Drug Observatories

#### Session objectives

- Explore changes in NDO research stemming from the incorporation of human-rights and gender perspectives.
- Share good practices and lessons learned from applying these approaches.
- Debate challenges and opportunities to strengthen their integration in the production and use of evidence.

Moderator: Luis Carlos Adame, Director, Dominican Drug Observatory, Dominican Republic

#### Speakers

- Carine Mutatayi, Scientific Analyst, French Observatory of Drugs and Drug Trends, France
- Esteban Pizarro, Head of Studies Area, SENDA, Chile
- Andrés Rodríguez, Head of the Information and Statistics Unit, ICD, Costa Rica

#### Open discussion

**17:30–17:40** Day's Recap: Graciela Ahumada

**12 September**

**9:00–10:30** Evaluation Methodologies for Drug Policies in the Face of Emerging Challenges

Objectives:

- Present methodologies and conceptual frameworks for evaluating the impact of drug policies on the population.
- Analyze their applicability to emerging phenomena and changing contexts.
- Share comparative experiences and lessons learned on impact evaluations.
- Strengthen technical cooperation and the use of evidence to guide policy formulation and adjustment.

Moderator: Andrés Ricardo Carrazco Montalvo, Secretary of the Interinstitutional Committee on Drug Policies, Ecuador

Speakers

- Héctor Suárez, Director, Uruguayan Drug Observatory, JND, Uruguay
- Jenny Fagua, Strategic and Analysis Deputy Director, Colombia Drug Observatory, Colombia
- Artur Malczewski, Head of the Department of Research, Monitoring and International Cooperation, CNP, Poland

Discussion

**10:30–10:45** Coffee Break

**10:45–12:00** Relevance of Epidemiological Studies: Alternatives and the Role of NDOs

Objectives:

- Review the relevance and usefulness of epidemiological studies on drug use.
- Present alternative methodologies and complementary information sources.
- Reinforce the role of NDOs in generating and using data for decision-making.

Moderator: Ernestina Rosendo, Argentine Drug Observatory, SEDRONAR, Argentina

Participants

- Esteban Pizarro, Head of Studies Area, SENDA, Chile
- Héctor Suárez, Director, Uruguayan Drug Observatory, JND, Uruguay
- Uki Atkinson, Senior Director, Research, Programme Development & Monitoring & Evaluation, NCDAD, Jamaica

- Artur Malczewski, Head of the Department of Research, Monitoring and International Cooperation, CNP, Poland

#### Discussion

### **12:00–13:30** Early Warning Systems on Drugs: Challenges and Innovations for an Effective Response

#### Objectives

- Analyze the current status and operating models of National Early Warning Systems.
- Explore how inter-institutional coordination and regional networks improve rapid detection and response to new psychoactive substances and emerging trends.
- Present technological innovations applicable to EWSs, such as wastewater analysis, online surveys, and the use of artificial intelligence.
- Identify challenges in the collection, validation, and dissemination of alerts.
- Share success stories and lessons learned that inspire the strengthening of these systems.

Moderator: Julio Quijivix, Director, Guatemalan Drug Observatory, SECATID, Guatemala

#### Participants

- António Óscar Duarte, Institute for Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies, ICAD, Portugal
- Pernell Clarke, Research Specialist, Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID), Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)
- Jenny Fagua, Strategic and Analysis Deputy Director, Colombia Drug Observatory, Colombia
- Keel County, Programme Officer, Secretariat of the National Drug Council, Trinidad and Tobago
- Brian Galvin, Head of the Irish National Focal Point

### **13:30–15:00** Lunch

### **15:00–17:00** Group Workshop on Future Perspectives in COPOLAD: Plans, Needs, Strategies

#### Objectives:

- Identify priority needs and challenges for the coming years.
- Propose concrete strategies and actions to address them.
- Point out opportunities for cooperation among countries and key actors.

Presentation of the working dynamic and thematic pillars (plans, needs, strategies), Graciela Ahumada, COPOLAD III



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**15:10–16:10** Group work with participants divided into mixed groups (by region, institutional profile, or thematic area). Each group will have a facilitator and a rapporteur.

**16:10–16:30** Coffee Break

**16:30–17:00** Plenary presentations (25 min)

Each group presents a summary of its conclusions (max. 5–6 minutes per group).

Synthesis and closing of the workshop (10 min)

**17:00–17:20** Closing of the Activity and Next Steps

- Borja Díaz Rivillas, Director of COPOLAD III
- Graciela Ahumada, COPOLAD III
- Representative of CONASAMA