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**Twenty-ninth Meeting of Heads of
National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies,
Latin America and the Caribbean**
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Draft report

Rapporteur: Soraya Carolina Cálix Ponce (Honduras)

Addendum

Consideration of topics by working groups

(b) Understanding the *modi operandi* and activities of organized criminal groups involved in drug trafficking

1. The working group on the above topic met during the fifth meeting, held on 9 October 2019. In its consideration of the topic in question, the working group formulated the following observations:

(a) Drug trafficking groups are actively exploiting various routes (sea, air, land, rivers), *modi operandi* and concealment methods for illicit drug trafficking. The rip-on rip-off method and the transfer of the drug shipments in high seas are widely spread in the region;

(b) Container shipments, as well as shipments by speed boats, recreational vessels, submersible vessels, transportation by small aircrafts as well as by means of post parcels are used by the drug trafficking groups;

(c) Drugs are being concealed in various legitimate cargos, in structures of the containers, vessels, vehicles, in pieces of luggage, impregnated in clothes, etc.;

(d) There are cases of involvement of corrupt staff of the port authorities in facilitating activities related to the illicit drug trafficking;

(e) Cases of manipulation of information contained in automated container processing systems and databases to avoid examination of certain containers were registered.

2. The working group drew up the following conclusions:

(a) There are changes in relation to the organized criminal groups involved in illicit drug trafficking, which resulted in a shift from hierarchical pyramidal type structures to horizontal arrangements, with various groups acting more or less independently;

* Available only in English, French and Spanish, which are the working languages of the subsidiary body.



(b) Apart from well-known trafficking channels, criminal groups are actively using navigable rivers for the transportation of significant amounts of drugs mainly towards the Atlantic coast for further shipment to North America, Africa (as transit point) and Europe;

(c) Multinational drug producing and drug trafficking groups are becoming more active and more “professional” benefiting from regional and international links. In many cases they are utilizing various technical means, including countersurveillance equipment and devices preventing wiretapping by the law enforcement agencies;

(d) Countering illicit drug trafficking by sea, land, air and rivers requires strong cooperation and coordination not only between the law enforcement agencies but also with navy, private sector, sea- dry- and air-port authorities and other actors.

3. The working group adopted the following recommendations:

(a) Governments should develop and further strengthen capacities of their competent authorities to intercept, investigate and prosecute significant multinational drug trafficking cases to enable disrupting drug trafficking channels and dismantling criminal groups involved;

(b) Governments should encourage their law enforcement agencies to use special investigative techniques including controlled deliveries, infiltration, other undercover operations to identify major drug trafficking groups and drug supply chains as well as related financial flows and consequently to undertake needed countermeasures;

(c) Governments should ensure regular exchange of information with counterparts on *modi operandi*, concealment methods, trafficking routes, criminal groups and their members, as well as best practices and effective countermeasures in tackling illicit drug trafficking.
