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English, French and Spanish only*

**Report of the Twenty-second Meeting of Heads of
National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America
and the Caribbean, held in Antigua, Guatemala,
from 1 to 5 October 2012**

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* English, French and Spanish are the working languages of the subsidiary body.

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I. Matters calling for action by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs or brought to its attention

Recommendations adopted by the Twenty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean

1. The Twenty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Latin America and the Caribbean, set up working groups to consider three main issues and to draw up recommendations on those issues. The observations and conclusions that led to the recommendations are presented in section IV. The Meeting adopted the recommendations below, which had been drawn up by its working groups.

Issue 1. Responding to the challenges posed to the region by the production of and trafficking in cocaine, cannabis and heroin

2. With regard to issue 1, “Responding to the challenges posed to the region by the production and trafficking of cocaine, cannabis and heroin”, the following recommendations were made:

(a) To assist the investigation of illicit trafficking and successful prosecution of those individuals responsible, Governments should ensure that their drug enforcement response is capable of undertaking the necessary level of forensic analysis of seized drugs and precursor chemicals;

(b) Governments must take steps to develop effective strategies that address the growing problem of microtrafficking that is threatening to expand domestic consumption and increase the demand for illicit drugs;

(c) Governments should support closer operational cooperation between the region’s law enforcement authorities in response to the ongoing operational challenge that maritime trafficking poses to effective enforcement.

Issue 2. Joint agency task forces in response to drug trafficking

3. With regard to issue 2, “Joint agency task forces in response to drug trafficking”, the following recommendations were made:

(a) In view of the increasingly sophisticated methods employed by trafficking networks, Governments should support their law enforcement authorities in formalizing agreements that enable cross-border task force cooperation in response to specific needs and operational requirements;

(b) Governments should carry out a review of current practices and procedures related to undertaking the investigation of illicit drug trafficking and related organized crime offences in foreign jurisdictions, together with a similar review of procedures related to the formal gathering of evidence from these jurisdictions, to determine if existing practices meet the operational needs of their criminal justice system;

(c) Governments should aim to strengthen national drug observatories by means of institutional capacity-building and inter-institutional coordination at the

domestic, regional and international levels in order to close gaps in data collection and exchange, thus enhancing their contribution to national and international decision-making and policy development;

(d) Governments should consider coordinating their drug law enforcement and related agencies' data systems to contribute analysis to national drug policy and strategy decision-making and further developing them to provide real-time information in support of operational responses;

(e) Governments should complement the information provided in the annual report questionnaire with relevant data compiled by the national drug observatories so that a more accurate assessment can be made regarding the follow-up on the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

Issue 3. Maintaining control over precursor chemicals and pharmaceutical preparations

4. With regard to issue 3, "Maintaining control over precursor chemicals and pharmaceutical preparations", the following recommendations were made:

(a) Governments should be encouraged to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of their domestic legal needs and requirements of controlled chemicals so as to arrive at a baseline figure that will assist in the identification of any attempts at illicit diversion;

(b) Governments must take steps to ensure that the staff employed in their national authorities responsible for precursor control are sufficiently trained with the specialized knowledge and professional skills required to effectively apply and enforce the legislation and procedures controlling their use, and that they remain in their post so as to maintain continuity;

(c) Governments are encouraged to strengthen their efforts and ensure that their law enforcement agencies are aware of the important role played by forensic analysis of seized precursor chemicals, the shared results of which lead to increased regional knowledge of sources of manufacture and patterns in trafficking;

(d) Governments should encourage their national authorities to develop pharmaceutical industry voluntary codes of conduct that support the effective implementation of national legislation and regulations, and that promote good cooperation and corporate responsibility between the public and private sectors concerned with transactions involving pharmaceutical preparations.

II. Major regional drug trafficking trends and countermeasures

5. At its 1st and 2nd meetings, on 1 October 2012, the Meeting considered item 3 of its agenda, entitled "Major regional drug trafficking trends and countermeasures". For its consideration of the item, the Meeting had before it a note by the Secretariat on statistics and drug trafficking trends in the Americas (UNODC/HONLAC/22/2) and a conference room paper on the current

situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation (UNODC/HONLAC/22/CRP.1). In addition, country reports on the drug trafficking situation were submitted by the Bahamas, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (UNODC/HONLAC/22/CRP.2-17).

6. A representative of UNODC introduced the item and made an audiovisual presentation on reported drug trafficking trends in the region in the context of global drug trafficking. The presentation was based on information provided by Governments to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The representatives of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Cuba, Paraguay, Trinidad and Tobago, Ecuador, Guatemala, Chile and Mexico made presentations.

7. Many participants informed the Meeting about recent developments relating to drug trafficking trends and the drug control situation in their countries, the region and worldwide, also providing information and data on national advances and achievements made in combating drug trafficking. Updated data and information on drug seizures, methods of concealment, air and maritime trafficking routes and the arrest of significant individuals were also shared. Reference was made to the seizure of aircrafts from drug traffickers, which were then used for social purposes.

8. A number of participants drew attention to the links between drug trafficking and related crimes, in particular the trafficking of weapons and trafficking in human beings. The adaptability of transnational organized crime groups in response to actions by authorities in combating the world drug problem, and the need for authorities to respond in a timely and equally adaptable manner, was also mentioned. In this regard, the need to strengthen domestic inter-institutional cooperation, as well as international cooperation, was stressed.

9. Particular attention was drawn to the high levels of violence that had characterized drug-related crime in a number of countries of the region over the past year, and to the threat illicit drug trafficking posed to security, stability and democracy in the region. One speaker mentioned the increasing threat of microtrafficking, that is, the trafficking of drugs destined for domestic consumption, which was being committed on a large scale and thus meant increasing quantities of illicitly trafficked drugs.

10. Many speakers provided information on the detection and eradication of illicit drug crops, the seizure and dismantling of clandestine laboratories used in the illicit manufacture of drugs and the smuggling and seizure of precursor chemicals. Some speakers mentioned the importance of alternative development strategies that would complement efforts in the eradication of illicit crops, and of pursuing these measures through dialogue and respect for human rights.

11. A number of participants also reported on the development and updating of national drug control plans and strategies and the updating of legislation and regulatory frameworks, particularly in connection with corruption prevention measures, money-laundering and the control of precursors. Some speakers pointed to the importance of cooperation with the private sector and civil society in this regard.

12. Several participants emphasized the importance of addressing the world drug problem on the basis of the principle of common and shared responsibility, noting that the world drug problem required an integrated, multidisciplinary and balanced approach. Most speakers mentioned the need to achieve a balance between mutually reinforcing supply reduction and demand reduction strategies.

13. Representatives also spoke of successful bilateral and subregional cooperation projects and joint operations, the sharing of information, the provision of training to other countries of the region and bilateral training received from countries within and outside the region. Information on new training and capacity-building programmes for law enforcement personnel and investment in equipment to support operational work was also discussed. Reference was made to successful work in the area of control and inspection at container ports and airports of the region, in particular through the UNODC/World Customs Organization (WCO) Container Control Programme.

14. Most speakers stressed the importance of strengthening the judicial sector and international cooperation to ensure prosecutions and extraditions, including through the reform of criminal procedures and the specialization of prosecutors. Efforts to ensure the appropriate drafting and implementation of legislation regarding asset forfeiture were also mentioned.

III. Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Twenty-first Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean

15. At its 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 1 and 2 October 2012, the Meeting considered item 4 of its agenda, entitled "Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Twenty-first Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean". The Meeting had before it a document prepared by the Secretariat (UNODC/HONLAC/22/3) on the basis of information provided by Governments in response to a questionnaire sent to all States members of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. The document reflected the answers received from Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Honduras, Italy, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) by 27 August 2012. After that date questionnaires were submitted by the Bahamas, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Canada, Chile, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France, Mexico, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America.

16. The Secretary of the Meeting made an introductory statement. The representatives of Spain, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Paraguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Panama, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Chile and Uruguay made statements on the actions their Governments had taken to implement the recommendations adopted at the Twenty-first Meeting, in addition to those already contained in document UNODC/HONLAC/22/3.

17. The representative of Spain referred to the measures his Government had carried out in precursor control and emphasized the importance of international

cooperation in combating drug trafficking, money-laundering and organized crime. In this regard, the speaker highlighted the work that the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), among other organs and mechanisms, had carried out through its four centres established in the region.

18. The representative of Colombia provided information on increasing cooperation with the private sector regarding codes of conduct in precursor control and referred to existing difficulties in incorporating small and medium-sized enterprises in this effort. The speaker also indicated that domestic legislation needed to be updated with a view to bringing under control newly identified precursors in accordance with current domestic legislation. The speaker referred to the efforts to monitor illicit crops in his country and the creation of an inter-institutional technical committee in the framework of the project “Integrated System for Illicit Crop Monitoring (Colombia)” (SIMCI), led by UNODC and the Government of Colombia. He also invited participants to two training workshops, on money-laundering and asset forfeiture and on precursor control, which would take place in Colombia in October 2012. Regarding container inspection, the representative of Colombia called upon participants in the Meeting to consider developing policy recommendations for achieving more certainty in the results of inspections carried out and substances identified. The speaker also referred to the international cooperation strategies being carried out by the Colombian armed forces in joint operations with neighbouring countries such as Brazil, Ecuador and Peru, in maritime interdictions and rivers in border areas, and with other countries such as Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Panama in the interdiction of cocaine paste, chemical precursors and gasoline. He also stressed the importance of continuing to carry out joint operations and regional cooperation.

19. The representative of Cuba referred to the National Drug Commission created in 1989, in which State entities involved in combating drug trafficking participated, in order to implement a national strategy. Participants included public security entities under the direction of the Ministry of Justice, as well as many sectors of society. He also referred to international cooperation that was being carried out with neighbouring countries such as the Bahamas, Jamaica and Mexico, and to specific exchanges of information with the United States Coast Guard.

20. The representative of Mexico referred to field tests, including the use of X-rays and other technologies, such as sampling through Phazir equipment, for the detection and identification of substances transported in containers, and indicated that, given that such tests were carried out through sampling, it was not always possible to detect illicit substances. The speaker also mentioned that a technical group on synthetic drugs had been created in the country, which furthered inter-institutional coordination. The speaker referred to existing cooperation between specialized prosecutors in the border states of Mexico, and in the United States, in order to further coordinated investigations in drug trafficking and related crimes, including trafficking in human beings. He also referred to the High-Level Security Group between Belize, Guatemala and Mexico, as well as to the bilateral meeting on the coordination of joint efforts that would take place on 4 and 5 October 2012 between Guatemala and Mexico.

21. The representative of Guatemala referred to the type of field tests that were currently being employed by other countries in the region and that could ensure more accuracy in identifying substances. The speaker also referred to her country's

participation in the agreement on the “Prevention of the diversion of drug precursors in the Latin American and Caribbean region” (PRELAC) and to recent efforts related to threat assessment to combat terrorism and drug trafficking, including through container control. Emphasis was also placed on cooperation with the private sector in precursor control, which enhanced the sharing of accurate information. Reference was made to inter-institutional integration that was being carried out for the protection of the area bordering Mexico, and of cooperation and joint operations between Guatemala and the United States, as well as with El Salvador and other countries in the region. She further indicated that “Operation Hammer”, which was being carried out in cooperation with the United States, had been successful in the fight against drug trafficking at sea. Guatemala had also been following the recommendations made by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) since a number of years, and had recently strengthened legislation relating to asset forfeiture. The country had also created a specialized anti-narcotics unit for investigations into money-laundering, as well as for the verification and follow-up of unusual or suspicious transactions, in order to provide enhanced information and evidence to the office of the prosecutor.

22. The representative of Ecuador indicated that his country was exchanging information and cooperating with countries in the region, including through training within the Anti-illicit Drug Programme of the Andean Community (PRADICAN). He also indicated that his Government had established an inter-agency response for container control involving various institutions and that the port authorities in his country were being supported by UNODC with special programs and software for profiling risk and raising alerts. The importance of the cooperation between Ecuador and Peru, and the integrated model of control which involved police, customs and other institutions on both sides of the border between the two countries, was also mentioned. Simultaneous and coordinated operations were being carried out with Colombia and Peru at the border and regular meetings of binational border commissions with Colombia and Peru were being held. Other joint operations between the police and the navy included the detection of traditional submersible and semi-submersible vessels, as well as military cooperation in the exchange of information with Colombia and Peru against trafficking in drugs and precursors. With regard to the seizure of the proceeds of drug trafficking and other crimes, Ecuador had legislation that allowed the establishment of financial intelligence units and other entities that supported financial investigations and allowed for the confiscation and forfeiture of the proceeds of illegal activities after criminal proceedings. The National Police of Ecuador also had specialized units against money-laundering that worked directly with the Office of the Public Prosecutor.

23. The representative of Paraguay reported that, since 2011, his country had had in place an inter-institutional arrangement in the framework of the UNODC/WCO Container Control Programme for an integrated approach to container control. He indicated that the Government had followed all the recommendations made by FATF and the Financial Action Task Force of South America (GAFISUD) in the fight against money-laundering and the financing of terrorism, which had allowed the country to be dropped from the “grey list” of countries with legislative deficiencies in this area.

24. The representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela indicated that his country had conducted simultaneous operations with Colombia with a view to destroying clandestine laboratories for cocaine production or processing. He also reported on joint military operations with Colombia and Ecuador for detecting and eradicating illicit crops in the border areas. His country relied on a law that allowed for the seizure and confiscation of the proceeds of drug-related crimes and money-laundering.

25. The representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia referred to simultaneous operations being carried out and bilateral cooperation agreements with Brazil, Chile, Peru and the United States, particularly in areas bordering Brazil and Peru where there had been illicit activity and where air interdictions were being successfully carried out.

26. The representative of Panama referred to bilateral agreements on patrolling and joint operations and on matters of jurisdiction to facilitate the intervention of a third affected State, and to situations where prosecutors of both countries had signed agreements related to drug trafficking, money-laundering and organized crime.

27. The representative of the United Kingdom referred to the important role of consumer countries in cooperating closely with producing and transit countries to combat drug trafficking and the activities of criminal gangs, and emphasized that greater success in the interdiction and seizure of drugs was achieved through joint operations and through the work of joint groups.

28. The representative of Chile referred to the importance of combating drug trafficking by tackling its three components, namely drugs, the organizational structure of organized crime and, in particular, the financial power of such groups. He further mentioned that his Government had a special law that adequately dealt with the crime of money-laundering. Furthermore, changes in domestic legislation were being sought to enable access to information protected by bank confidentiality.

29. The representative of Uruguay indicated that his country had had tribunals specialized in organized crime and drug trafficking since 2009, as well as an office specialized in the research of seized goods and bank accounts, and that drug policies were carried out by a specialized office on money-laundering under the executive branch.

IV. Consideration of topics by working groups

30. At its 4th to 8th meetings, from 2 to 4 October 2012, the Meeting considered item 5 of its agenda, entitled "Consideration of topics by working groups". The observations and conclusions of the working groups are presented below. For the recommendations of the working groups approved by the plenary, see section I above.

Observations and conclusions of the working groups

Issue 1. Responding to the challenges posed to the region by the production and trafficking of cocaine, cannabis and heroin

31. The working group on issue 1, “Responding to the challenges posed to the region by the production and trafficking of cocaine, cannabis and heroin”, held two meetings, on 2 and 3 October 2012. In its consideration of the topic, the working group made the following observations:

(a) The region is witnessing significant changes to the traditional production of illicit crops. Coca bush cultivation is more sophisticated, plantations are smaller, crop cycles shorter and new methods are being employed to extract higher quantities of coca alkaloids. Similar changes have been seen in the production of cannabis: plantations have become smaller to avoid detection, and plants with higher tetra-hydrocannabinoid (THC) content and that mature faster and have shorter harvesting cycles are cultivated;

(b) Traffickers are becoming more adept at circumventing the restrictions imposed by international controls over precursor chemicals. Clandestine laboratories increasingly use non-controlled chemical substances to extract coca alkaloids, recycle chemicals such as potassium permanganate and sulphuric acid and manufacture hydrochloric acid on-site;

(c) The technical study and evaluation of alkaloids extracted in cocaine production offer insights to authorities on the precursor chemicals currently being used or sought for diversion;

(d) There is a need for a greater exchange of the results of forensic analysis of seized drugs and precursor chemicals between law enforcement authorities, both nationally and regionally;

(e) Drug trafficking organizations are adopting a much lower profile in carrying out their illegal operations. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult for law enforcement authorities to identify the principals, organizers and hierarchy of drug trafficking organizations;

(f) Gangs are becoming increasingly involved in many aspects of drug trafficking, from street sales and distribution to the enforcement of sales territories and the collection of drug-related debts and money-laundering. The link between their involvement in trafficking, related violence and increasing homicide statistics is also clear;

(g) Maritime transport of cocaine remains the primary mode of trafficking in bulk quantities exported from the principal region and countries of production, while heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants such as methamphetamine are more commonly transported by land vehicles or human couriers.

32. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) The adoption of new production approaches to the cultivation of illicit, plant-based crops should encourage a similar re-examination by authorities of their response strategies to reducing production and discouraging demand;

(b) Though traffickers are turning to the use of alternative chemicals and ad hoc procedures to maintain the production of cocaine and other illicit drugs, it is clear that national and international controls on the essential precursor chemicals needed for their production should be maintained and strengthened further to restrict manufacture;

(c) Drug trafficking organizations are better equipped to adapt faster to changing circumstances than law enforcement authorities. They now invest heavily in modern technology, are increasingly fluid in their operations and are prepared to outsource elements of their criminal enterprise — e.g. transport payment collection, extortion and debt collection — to criminal alliances. This diversification in their operations is a contributing factor to the growth of microtrafficking;

(d) Tracking the manufacture, movement and distribution of illicit drugs through the forensic analysis of seizures and recovered precursor chemicals contributes important evidence to successful investigations;

(e) The increase in and persistence of the deployment of submersible and semi-submersible vessels capable of carrying cargoes of up to 20 tons of cocaine should be taken very seriously, as submersible and semi-submersible craft present an operational challenge to authorities because they are difficult to detect. Authorities of the region must work together and focus attention on the ports and regions of departure and destination.

Issue 2. Joint agency task forces in response to drug trafficking

33. The working group on issue 2, “Joint agency task forces in response to drug trafficking”, held two meetings on 3 October 2012. In its consideration of the topic, the working group made the following observations:

(a) Some States had insufficient resources to robustly meet the challenges of drug trafficking and so were vulnerable to the adverse influence of powerful trafficking groups;

(b) National inter-agency task forces had been convened in response to specific threats where multi-agency, overlapping legislative responsibilities needed to be coordinated to combat precursor diversion. Outcomes had led to the prevention of diversion attempts and the identification of clandestine manufacturing sites through geo-referencing and the tracking of the routes of diverted chemicals;

(c) Encouraging operational partnerships between national law enforcement agencies, e.g. to enforce border controls in remote or difficult regions where a single agency acting alone may not have sufficient resources to undertake the task, enhanced their capacity to be effective;

(d) The timely exchange of relevant information and evidence between Latin American, Caribbean, European and other countries was essential for successful investigations in destination countries to dismantle international organized drug trafficking networks. The same principles apply for the arrest of fugitives wanted in connection with serious drug trafficking offences. International cooperation is the basis for operational success in this field;

(e) A number of countries had formalized inter-service cooperation agreements with military services (army, navy, air force) and civilian police forces

in support of their national strategy against illicit drug production and trafficking. Significant successes against drug trafficking had been achieved through such partnerships;

(f) International inter-agency task forces between law enforcement agencies had been convened in response to shared cross-border, regional and international trafficking threats, and included partnerships with foreign drug law enforcement authorities and international agencies;

(g) The two United Nations initiatives — the Container Control Programme and the Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP) — supported both domestic and international inter-agency cooperation in an operational response to sea and air border control;

(h) The proactive use of intelligence obtained from all sources available to law enforcement agencies formed the right basis for effective action against drug trafficking, while information obtained through cooperation in joint task forces had led to the arrest of international fugitives wanted for trafficking offences;

(i) Data provided by national drug observatories were an important tool for making accurate decisions and formulating policies on drug supply and demand, owing to the inter-institutional nature of the information gathered.

34. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) Joint agency task forces were important because they developed the necessary synergies between different law enforcement agencies and bridged the gap between civilian and military enforcement countermeasures against illicit drug production and trafficking;

(b) It was inevitable that multi-agency cooperation would lead to encounters with criminal organizations involved in illicit activities other than drug trafficking, which would result in more effective policing and would lead to greater community protection. The successes experienced by the agencies partnered in the Container Control Programme and AIRCOP initiatives were a result of the effectiveness of this approach;

(c) The timely exchange of information and evidence was essential for the arrest of fugitives wanted in connection with serious drug trafficking offences, and international cooperation was the basis for such success;

(d) Cooperation agreements between national and other multilateral entities dedicated to combating drug trafficking, as well as law enforcement liaison officers posted abroad, offered invaluable access to international operational support and intelligence on trafficking groups and their *modi operandi*;

(e) The international task forces Operation Cohesion and Project Prism, coordinated by the International Narcotics Control Board, had proved very effective in reducing the diversion of precursor chemicals to illicit drug manufacture;

(f) It was important to strengthen the capacities of national drug observatories so as to be able to strengthen information-sharing and coordinated efforts, as there existed differences in the structures of such bodies in countries across the region;

(g) Governments should consider including the national drug observatories in their delegations to the next meeting of HONLEA, in order to hold parallel technical working groups and to enrich the deliberations.

Issue 3. Maintaining control over precursor chemicals and pharmaceutical preparations

35. The working group on issue 3, “Maintaining control over precursor chemicals and pharmaceutical preparations”, held three meetings, on 3 and 4 October 2012. In its consideration of the topic, the working group made the following observations:

(a) An ongoing challenge for authorities is to identify the transnational criminal organizations engaged in the diversion of precursors and essential chemicals, the *modi operandi* they employ to divert and transport those chemicals and the routes taken to the illicit production sites;

(b) Chemical precursor diversion methods are numerous and diverse, for example, false labelling of chemicals, tampering with batch numbers, cash payments, collection in person, the use of small companies, multiple orders for small quantities of controlled substances and undeclared sales;

(c) It is essential that authorities cooperate well with chemical and pharmaceutical industries and together share responsibility for the enforcement of controls and restrictions over chemical sales;

(d) The PRELAC initiative is making a valuable contribution through its support of public administrative and control bodies, enforcement agencies and private sector chemical industries, to strengthen their capacity to prevent the illegal diversion of precursor chemicals;

(e) Many officers employed by national chemical control authorities have insufficient training in or professional knowledge of the details and diversity of the chemical industry they are policing. Examples cited were a lack of knowledge of health and safety protocols for handling chemicals, lack of knowledge of chemical properties and lack of forensic accounting skills when undertaking audits of chemical companies;

(f) The current focus of controls on pharmaceutical preparations is not strong enough. Many pharmaceutical preparations are very effective for managing pain, but they are also highly addictive and their abuse builds up a tolerance to their effects. A similar threat lies in the misuse of psychotropic pharmaceutical products;

(g) Many controlled chemicals and pharmaceutical preparations are available through the Internet. Online sources are a further challenge to authorities responsible for administrative control over their sale and distribution;

(h) It is important to strengthen relations between the chemical and pharmaceutical industries and the competent governmental entities responsible for developing effective control mechanisms for controlled substances and precursors.

36. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) There is a need to improve the professional skills and knowledge of officers employed by the national authorities responsible for chemical regulation

and control. The private sector should be encouraged to support the training of authorities in the areas of health, handling and safety in relation to chemicals;

(b) In a number of countries of the region the existing staff rotation policy results in a high turnover of trained officers and can have an adverse impact upon the experience and professional competency of some of the authorities responsible for precursor control;

(c) There is a need to strengthen cooperation in the sharing of information on the international trade in precursor chemicals and to develop a clear understanding of legitimate domestic chemical needs;

(d) Authorities need to adapt their strategies to meet the challenges of developing technologies such as the Internet, as it is a source for obtaining controlled substances and preparations.

V. Follow-up to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem

37. At its 8th meeting, on 4 October 2012, the Meeting considered item 6 of its agenda, entitled “Follow-up to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem”. For its consideration of the item, the Meeting had before it the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the outcome of the high-level segment of its fifty-second session, on progress achieved in meeting the goals and targets set out in the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session (A/64/92-E/2009/98).

38. The Secretary of the Meeting made an introductory statement. The representatives of Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Paraguay and the Bahamas made statements.

39. The Secretary provided information on the areas covered and the main actions envisaged in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, adopted at the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/182. Attention was drawn, in particular, to part II of the Plan of Action, on supply reduction and related measures, and to the first round of responses provided by Member States to the annual report questionnaire, as contained in the report on action taken by Member States to implement the Political Declaration and Plan of Action submitted to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session. It was noted that the Commission would conduct a review of the implementation by Member States of the Plan of Action at its fifty-seventh session, in 2014, and that the Meetings of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, could contribute to that review by transmitting their input on the implementation, in particular of part II of the Plan of Action.

40. All speakers reiterated that their Governments remained fully committed to the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action.
41. The representative of Cuba reiterated the political will of his Government to make every possible effort to combat the scourge of international drug trafficking. He indicated that the HONLEA meeting had heard about efforts made by the countries in the region to reduce drug trafficking, but that it had not received information on the efforts made by consumer countries to reduce drug demand.
42. The representative of Mexico indicated that her Government had placed special emphasis not only on the importance of supply reduction, but also on the issue of the exchange of information, and in this regard referred to the statistical yearbook produced by Mexico based on a recommendation of the Fifth meeting of HONLEA.
43. The representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela indicated that many of the elements contained in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action had served as a basis for the development of the national plan to combat the abuse of narcotic drugs, as well as for relevant domestic legislation, and were part of the organic drug law and the anti-organized crime law.
44. The representative of Ecuador indicated that his Government was carrying out legal reforms, as currently the implementation of certain investigation techniques were not envisaged in existing laws. He further indicated that elements of the Political Declaration and its Plan of Action had also served as a basis for the national anti-drug plan.
45. The representative of Guatemala requested Member States not to forget to also consider the drug problem from a health perspective, as human beings were the victims at the centre of the world drug problem.
46. The representative of Peru indicated that all elements contained in the Political Declaration and its Plan of Action were included in the national plan to combat drug abuse in the country.
47. The representative of Paraguay indicated that his Government had always considered international cooperation to be essential in countering the world drug problem.
48. The representative of the Bahamas indicated that his Government had always shaped policies so that they conformed at the tactical level to the Plan of Action.

VI. Organization of the Twenty-third Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean

49. At its 9th meeting, on 5 October 2012, the Meeting considered item 7 of its agenda, entitled "Organization of the Twenty-third Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean". For its consideration of the item, the Meeting had before it a note by the Secretariat (UNODC/HONLAC/22/4) drawing attention to certain issues that needed to be

addressed during the Twenty-third Meeting and containing a draft provisional agenda for that Meeting.

50. The Chair of the Meeting made a statement. Statements were also made by the representatives of Cuba, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Ecuador and Trinidad and Tobago. The Secretary of the Meeting also made a statement.

51. The Secretary informed the Meeting that the period from 30 September to 11 October 2013 had been reserved for the Twenty-third Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean. The Chair invited delegations that were interested in hosting the Twenty-third Meeting to contact the Secretariat in order to determine the venue of the Meeting as early as possible and thus to facilitate preparations.

52. The Meeting held a comprehensive discussion on possible topics to be considered for discussion by the working groups at the Twenty-third Meeting, under item 5 of the draft provisional agenda. The following topics were proposed: (a) recent experiences in demand reduction and prevention measures and drug dependence treatment; (b) the growing problem of microtrafficking; (c) the role of national drug observatories in supporting informed decision-making through their collection and analysis of data; (d) the increasing levels of violence in the region associated with drug trafficking and the related crime of trafficking in weapons; (e) developing an integrated strategy to strengthen control over illicit flights; (f) the developing trend of trafficking in liquid cocaine; (g) addressing trafficking by means of submersible and semi-submersible vessels at sea; (h) maintaining effective control over precursor chemicals and pharmaceutical preparations; (i) the problem of money-laundering; (j) the trend towards low-value money transfers; (k) controlling private flights used to ferry cash; and (l) countering corruption linked to drug trafficking within drug law enforcement agencies.

53. The Meeting took note of the proposals and requested the Secretariat to finalize the issues to be discussed by working groups prior to the Twenty-third Meeting. On that basis, the following draft provisional agenda for the Twenty-third Meeting was approved:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Major regional drug trafficking trends and countermeasures.
4. Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Twenty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean.
5. Consideration of topics by working groups [*to be determined*].
6. Follow-up to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

7. Organization of the Twenty-fourth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean.
8. Other business.
9. Adoption of the report.

VII. Other business

54. At its 9th meeting, on 5 October 2012, the Meeting considered item 8 of its agenda, entitled "Other business".

55. Statements were made by the representatives of Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The observer for the Russian Federation also made a statement.

56. The representative of Mexico, recalling a recommendation of the Fifth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, reiterated the commitment of the Government of Mexico to continue serving as a centre for the collection, compilation and dissemination of data in an annual statistical publication on drug supply reduction covering countries of the region, which was made available at the Meetings of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean. The speaker also indicated that the annual statistical publication could be used as a tool and serve as an efficient mechanism for countries in the region in the analysis of trends in drug and precursor supply, and that Mexico would look into the possibility of creating a directory of liaison offices responsible for collecting and communicating drug supply reduction data, as well as a single format for transmitting the data.

57. The representative of Colombia supported the statement made by the representative of Mexico, and indicated that the annual statistical publication was a practical tool in the follow-up of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

58. The representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela stressed the importance of national drug observatories in compiling relevant and updated information.

59. The observer for the Russian Federation stressed that the issues related to the world drug problem were not limited to specific regions but were global in nature. As far as Latin America was concerned, his country faced important challenges concerning cocaine trafficking, including by sea from Ecuador and by air from the Dominican Republic. He also highlighted the increasing cooperation between the national competent authorities of the Russian Federation and their counterparts in countries of the region, including the implementation of training courses in Guatemala and Nicaragua, a controlled delivery exercise with the participation of Cuba, Nicaragua and Panama, and the establishment of a cooperation office in Lima, based on an international agreement signed with Peru in 2011.

VIII. Adoption of the report of the Twenty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean

60. At its 9th meeting, on 5 October 2012, the Twenty-second Meeting adopted its report (UNODC/HONLAC/22/L.1 and Add.1-5), including the reports of the working groups and the recommendations contained therein, as orally revised.

IX. Organization of the Meeting

A. Opening and duration of the Meeting

61. The Twenty-second Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, was held in Antigua, Guatemala, from 1 to 5 October 2012. The inaugural ceremony was held on 1 October 2012, when the Meeting was addressed by the President of Guatemala, Otto Fernando Pérez Molina, the Vice-Minister of the Interior of Guatemala, Arkel Benítez Mendizábal, and the representative of the Executive Director and Regional Representative for Central America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Amado de Andrés.

62. The Chair of the Twenty-second Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Minister of Interior of Guatemala, Mauricio López Bonilla, also addressed the meeting.

B. Attendance

63. The following States members of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean were represented: Argentina, Bahamas, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, France, Germany, Guatemala, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

64. The Russian Federation was represented by observers.

65. The European Union, the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, the International Criminal Police Organization, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization, the Department of Safety and Security of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme were represented by observers.

66. UNODC served as the secretariat of the Meeting.

C. Election of officers

67. At its 1st meeting, on 1 October 2012, the Meeting elected the following officers by acclamation:

<i>Chair:</i>	Mauricio López Bonilla (Guatemala)
<i>First Vice-Chair:</i>	Markel Mora (Panama)
<i>Second Vice-Chair:</i>	José Ramón Castillo (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)
<i>Rapporteur:</i>	Golda Chase (Trinidad and Tobago)

D. Adoption of the agenda

68. Also at the 1st meeting, the Twenty-second Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted the following agenda:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Major regional drug trafficking trends and countermeasures.
4. Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Twenty-first Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean.
5. Consideration of topics by working groups:
 - (a) Responding to the challenges posed to the region by the production and trafficking of cocaine, cannabis and heroin;
 - (b) Joint agency task forces in response to drug trafficking;
 - (c) Maintaining control over precursor chemicals and pharmaceutical preparations.
6. Follow-up to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.
7. Organization of the Twenty-third Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean.
8. Other business.
9. Adoption of the report.

E. Documentation

69. The documents before the Twenty-second Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, are listed in the annex.

X. Closure of the Meeting

70. The representatives of Colombia, Peru, Paraguay and Mexico made statements expressing appreciation for the hospitality and welcome provided by the Government of Guatemala as host of the Meeting. The Chair of the Twenty-second Meeting and the Vice-Minister of the Interior of Guatemala made closing statements.

Annex

List of documents before the Twenty-second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Latin America and the Caribbean

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
UNODC/HONLAC/22/1	2	Provisional agenda and annotations
UNODC/HONLAC/22/2	3	Note by the Secretariat on statistics on drug trafficking trends and countermeasures
UNODC/HONLAC/22/3	4	Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Twenty-first Meeting
UNODC/HONLAC/22/4	7	Note by the Secretariat on the organization of the Twenty-third Meeting
UNODC/HONLAC/22/L.1 and Add.1-5	9	Draft report
UNODC/HONLAC/22/CRP.1	3	Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation
UNODC/HONLAC/22/CRP.2-17	3	Country reports