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| From: | US Regional Chair of the Dublin Group |
| To: | Dublin Group |
| Subject: | Regional report on Central America |

1. Progress of work of the mini-Dublin Groups

The United States chairs the Central America Regional Dublin Group and is responsible for providing an annual report to the Central Dublin Group on drug-related issues and activities in the region, including documenting the work of Mini Dublin Groups in Central American countries. The Central America Regional Dublin Group consists of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Although Belize is part of the Caribbean Regional Dublin Group, it has been included in this report. This report covers activities in the region between January 2013 and September 2014.

Central American governments have tasked the Central American Integration System (SICA) to coordinate international cooperation to address organized crime and drug trafficking in Central America and to support the implementation of citizen security programs contained in the SICA Security Strategy. The United States and other international donors work with SICA through the SICA Group of Friends of Central America mechanism. For this reason the Dublin Group has not been active in Central America. In lieu of information provided by Mini Dublin Groups, this report relies on information on the illicit drugs situation based on information from SICA meetings and the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR), which the United States prepares annually, as required by U.S. law. The INSCR is available at <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2014/>.

1.1 Overview of the regional situation regarding illicit narcotics production

Narcotics trafficking continues to be a serious threat to citizen security in Central America. Approximately 86 percent of the cocaine trafficked to the United States in the first half of 2013 transited through the Mexico/Central America corridor. This has ripple effects on social, economic, and governance institutions in the region, as drug trafficking is often linked to large transnational organized criminal organizations that are involved in other crimes such as human trafficking. Corruption continues to be a concern, and many citizens are losing faith in their country's ability to keep them safe and effectively combat large transnational drug trafficking organizations.

Trafficking in precursor chemicals is also a growing concern, particularly unscheduled chemicals used in the production of methamphetamines. In response to increased regulation and enforcement efforts, traffickers are changing their routes and the types of chemicals that are trafficked. Mexico-based traffickers are moving away from the phosphorus-iodine production method (which uses pseudoephedrine as a precursor) to the Phenyl-2-propanone (P2P method, which does not require pseudoephedrine) due to a ban on pseudoephedrine in 2008. In addition, increased interdiction and enforcement efforts in Mexico have shifted the problem further south to Central American countries, that are having a difficult time securing and disposing of these chemicals.

1.2 *Presentation of the national situation regarding illicit narcotics production, consumption and trafficking in narcotics and psychotropic substances, money laundering and precursor control*

1.2.1 Belize

Belize continues to be a transshipment country for cocaine, heroin, and precursor chemicals. The country did see an increase in the use of cannabis in 2013, and “crack” cocaine is the second most abused drug. Through October 2013, the Government of Belize seized over 115 metric tons of marijuana, over three kg of cocaine, and four kg of methamphetamine. During a particularly successful operation in April 2013, the Belize Defence Force, the Police Anti-Drug Unit, and the Mobile Interdiction Team, with U.S. assistance, destroyed 16 marijuana fields, 61,000 plants, 150kg of marijuana, and 10kg of marijuana seeds. Belize has had success in tackling organized crime. On the demand reduction side, Belize has three operational drug rehabilitation centers.

With respect to money laundering, Belize continues to work to address AML/CTF deficiencies. In 2013, the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) issued a statement recommending that CFATF member states take counter measures to protect their financial systems from anti-money laundering (AML) and counter terrorist financing threats (CFT) emanating from Belize and Guyana. In February 2014, Belize passed anti-money laundering legislation. Subsequently, CATF issued a statement maintaining the warning for Guyana but dropping it for Belize, noting the significant progress Belize had made in working to address these issues. Laundered proceeds tend to come from organized criminal groups involved in the trafficking of illegal narcotics, psychotropic substances, and chemical precursors.

Belize faces geographic and institutional challenges in combating narcotics trafficking. Many areas of the country are sparsely populated or difficult to patrol, such as the jungles on the border with Guatemala and the along the coastline. Resource constraints continue to be a factor, leading to shortfalls in equipment and a lack of personnel in enforcement agencies such as the Coast Guard and the Anti-Drug Unit.

A consequence of government efforts to diversify Belize's economy has been increased vulnerability to money laundering. The Government of Belize actively encouraged the growth of offshore financial activities, but these activities, including offshore banks, insurance companies, trust service providers, mutual fund companies, and international business companies, are vulnerable to money laundering.

Lack of political will and corruption also impedes investigations and prosecutions. The government did not charge anyone under the Prevention of Corruption Act in 2013.

1.2.2 Costa Rica

Costa Rica's strategic location, extensive coastlines, and jurisdiction over remote Cocos Island makes it a major transit country for illicit drugs. Due to increased government efforts, interdictions increased in Costa Rica in 2013. From 2012 to 2013, cocaine seizures jumped by 33 percent, and, in the first half of 2014, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) reported roughly 20,000 kilos in cocaine seizures - more than the entire haul for all of fiscal year 2013. This is attributed in part to greater coordination between the United States and Costa Rica, improved intelligence, and improved capabilities of Costa Rica to act on that intelligence.

With respect to demand reduction, there has been a shift towards treatment and rehabilitation for drug users. In May 2013, the security minister stated that drug consumption is a public health concern, and that the country should offer treatment instead of punishment for addicts. In February 2013, Costa Rica launched a pilot program to offer rehabilitation instead of prison to offenders who commit minor crimes under the influence of drugs.

Combating money laundering continues to be a challenge in Costa Rica, but in 2013, the Public Ministry established a separate Money Laundering and Asset Forfeiture Bureau. Much of the money comes from the proceeds of cocaine trafficking, and is laundered through online gaming operations.

Like many countries in Central America, Costa Rica faces resource challenges, as well as challenges due to its strategic location. In addition, investigators often do not use more sophisticated investigative techniques such as cooperating witnesses, confidential informants, electronic surveillance, and undercover operations, which limit the scope and complexity of investigations.

There is also a significant legislative gap when it comes to money laundering prosecutions. Money laundering cannot be charged as an additional offense to the predicate crime. Prosecutors much choose which charge to pursue.

The Government of Costa Rica has invested political will in combating drug trafficking issues. The National Plan on Drugs for 2013-2017 highlights the issue of chemical precursors. Costa Rica has a drug unit dedicated to this issue, which has broad powers to monitor and respond to illegal activity. In 2013, Costa Rica established a new Border Police Force and invested in the Coast Guard. These investments are an illustration of how seriously the Government of Costa Rica takes crime issues. However, this has not translated into public confidence in the security services. According to a poll in September 2013, government corruption is the issue that most worries citizens – more than unemployment, the high cost of living, drug trafficking, and citizen insecurity. Nearly 40 percent said they would not call the police in the event of a crime.

1.2.3 El Salvador

Narcotics trafficking is a significant threat to citizen security in El Salvador. Organized criminal groups facilitate smuggling of drugs, weapons, as well as human trafficking. Through October 2013, the Government of El Salvador seized 664 kg of cocaine (approximately double amount from 2012), two kg of heroin, and 908.4kg of marijuana. 460kg of cocaine was seized in one operation in July 2013 that involved a tractor-trailer transporting cocaine from Costa Rica.

The Government of El Salvador took steps in 2013 to try to address the challenges posed by narcotics trafficking. The Attorney General's office devoted resources to the destruction and proper disposition of nearly 80 percent of a stockpile of precursor chemicals from a seizure in 2011. El Salvador also approved an asset forfeiture law in November 2013.

El Salvador faces many challenges. There is a lack of law enforcement personnel, and the resources to appropriately train existing personnel. Law enforcement agencies also lack the necessary expertise and equipment to effectively control the country's borders and conduct complex investigations and prosecutions. These efforts are also hampered by a lack of data on the magnitude of the threat – both with respect to drug trafficking and domestic consumption.

Cooperation between the United States and El Salvador is guided by the Partnership for Growth, which includes programming related to law enforcement, judicial reform, prison overcrowding, and at-risk youth. The United States works with the National Civilian Police on the implementation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) program. In 2013, 18 officers became GREAT instructors, and 9,000 youth completed the GREAT curriculum.

1.2.4 Guatemala

Narcotics trafficking and the associated criminal violence continues to be a significant issue for Guatemala. Violent crime in the country rose in 2013. The Government of Guatemala seized nearly 4,000 kg of cocaine and 18.5 kg of heroin through September 2013. During that same period, the Government of Guatemala destroyed four methamphetamine labs. In addition, the Government of Guatemala estimated that it eradicated 2,568 hectares of opium poppies and 2 million marijuana plants through October 2013. Beginning in early 2014, the Government of Guatemala began using a GPS system to measure eradicated hectares which significantly increases the accuracy of reporting on eradication. The government also made greater use of the Seized Assets Law. The government disbursed more than \$2.45 million in seized funds to various government institutions. This was a \$1.36 million increase over 2012 figures. The government also established a new land interdiction unit to better screen vehicles at mobile check points. Increased enforcement at ports has led to increased land border trafficking.

Money laundering reportedly increased in 2013, driven largely by the proceeds from narcotics trafficking, corruption, and extortion. Travelers are able to escape the reporting requirement by carrying slightly less than the reporting threshold amount. In addition, private international flights from Guatemala are not closely monitored, allowing for bulk cash shipments to South America.

Like many other countries in the region, Guatemala faces challenges in combating narcotics trafficking due to weak public institutions, pervasive corruption, and a lack of resources. There are also large ungoverned areas along the country's borders, which facilitates trafficking. The government also does not have sufficient resources to pay adequate law enforcement salaries, and corruption proliferates among law enforcement and criminal justice sector personnel.

Guatemala is increasingly becoming a manufacturing base for synthetic drugs, and trafficking continues to be a serious problem. Precursor chemicals are also a major concern. Guatemala has taken steps to address this issue. In 2013, the United States funded an OAS proposal to improve Guatemala's ability to manage and dispose of precursor chemicals. The project also included development of a national standard operating procedure for the handling of dangerous chemicals seized in law enforcement operations. In December 2013, 35 government technicians and two OAS supervisors received training on the appropriate techniques of identifying, handling, storing, transporting, and disposing of precursor chemicals. Work on identifying and consolidating all seized precursors began in January 2014, in preparation for their disposal.

In 2013, the Ministry of Health conducted a nationwide assessment of 65 treatment centers in Guatemala. The assessment found that the majority of the centers did not meet government minimum treatment standard requirements.

The Government of Guatemala has publicly made combating narcotics trafficking a priority. The government is also tackling high-profile corruption and criminal organizations through its support of the UN-backed International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG). President Pérez Molina requested and received an extension of the mandate of CICIG, which the UN and Guatemalan government agreed upon, allowing the organization to operate until September 2015, and there is speculation that it may be extended further. This body was created in 2007 to investigate and dismantle criminal organizations operating within state institutions.

1.2.5 Honduras

Honduras is a major transit country for narcotics. Violence, particularly homicides, is a significant concern for the country.

Organized crime and corruption impose costs on citizens and businesses through extortion and kidnapping schemes. Approximately 80 percent of all cocaine that transits Honduras is via maritime routes. Forty percent of all cocaine destined for the United States transits Honduras. Honduran authorities claim that 7 out of 10 homicides in Honduras are drug-related, either directly or indirectly. While the drug trade has acted as an accelerant to crime, the long-standing roots of the rise in violent crime are insufficient livelihood opportunities, weak institutions and general impunity.

Drug smuggling flights are a significant challenge for Honduras, particularly in the Caribbean coastal areas. The United States estimated that in 2012, 75 percent of all cocaine smuggling flights from South America first landed in Honduras. In 2013, the Government of Honduras seized more than \$800 million in drug-related cash and assets, and more than 1.7 metric tons of cocaine. The United States and the OAS are working with Honduras to destroy stockpiles of seized precursor chemicals. However, further success in counternarcotics efforts is hampered by limited infrastructure, lack of government presence, and weak law enforcement institutions.

The flow of drugs from South America directly into Honduras appeared to fall from 2012 to 2013, although the causes are likely more external to Honduras. In addition, coordinated U.S. and Honduran activities launched in 2014 are having an impact on maritime trafficking along the North Coast, according to USSOUTHCOM. Honduras extradited drug trafficker Carlos Lobo, who is connected to Mexico's Sinaloa Cartel, to the United States on May 8. He is the first Honduran national ever to be extradited, and a demonstration of President Hernandez's commitment to changing his country's image against crime and impunity. The October 2014 arrests of Arnulfo and Jose Reynerio Valle Valle, leaders of a major Honduran Drug Trafficking Organization, further demonstrated Honduran commitment to the rule of law.

1.2.6 Nicaragua

The total volume of drugs seized in 2013 decreased from 2012. Through the end of September 2013, the Government of Nicaragua seized three metric tons of cocaine and 250 metric tons of marijuana. Synthetic drugs are not a significant concern in Nicaragua. Domestic drug use overall is becoming a more serious concern, as the use of “crack” cocaine, methamphetamine and marijuana are on the rise. Interdiction and prosecution efforts are hampered by limited law enforcement capabilities, corruption in the judicial sector, and interference at the political level. Substantial sparsely populated regions also make interdiction efforts difficult.

1.2.7 Panama

Panama’s strategic location makes it a transshipment point for illicit trafficking, but Panama is also a leader in the region with respect to narcotics interdiction. In 2013, the Government of Panama seized 41 metric tons of cocaine (a 20.6 percent increase over 2012), 2.2 metric tons of cannabis, 134kg of chemical precursors, and 123kg of heroin. The Panamanian National Police is implementing a comparative statistics model (COMPSTAT), which will allow for real-time mapping and analysis of criminal activity. This should help lead to more effective policing and better allocation of finite resources.

Despite this, Panama’s Security Minister has publicly expressed concern about the influence of drug-trafficking on the political process. Several security-service members involved in trafficking were detained in 2013.

The United States is supporting Panama’s transition to an accusatory justice system, which has been implemented in four of nine provinces. The new system has been successful in reducing case processing times, which has in turn helped to reduce delays and back-ups in the criminal justice system. There are concerns that the Government of Panama will not devote sufficient resources to this project to implement it throughout the country, a concern that merits further monitoring by donors.

Geographic location is a prime driver of trafficking through Panama. Panama has strong transportation infrastructure, such as the Pan-American Highway, and the second largest free-trade zone in the world. It also has four major container seaports and the fourth busiest airport in Latin America. Criminals exploit this infrastructure to move drugs through the country.

Geography also makes Panama a target for money launderers, using the country's infrastructure as a regional financial and trade hub to move the proceeds of drug trafficking through the country. The judicial system faces challenges prosecuting and adjudicating complex financial crime and money laundering cases and there is a lack of collaboration among government agencies, which is necessary to tackle these complex investigations.

1.3 Summarizing the work of the mini-Dublin Groups in the region

1.3.1. Regional Summary. Donor coordination continues to be a priority in the region.

Currently, most donor coordination takes place under the Group of Friends/SICA rubric, instead of through Mini Dublin Group Meetings. Recent donor coordination efforts are listed below.

1.3.2. Belize. No formal Dublin Group Meeting.

May 2014: Belize Development Partner Group Meeting was led by the UN resident coordinator and focused on the lack of human resource capacity.

1.3.3. Costa Rica. No formal Dublin Group Meeting.

1.3.4. El Salvador. No formal Dublin Group Meeting.

1.3.5. Guatemala. No formal Dublin Group Meeting.

1.3.6. Honduras. No formal Dublin Group Meeting.

1.3.7. Nicaragua. No formal Dublin Group Meeting.

1.3.8. Panama. February 2014: Mini-Dublin Group Meeting to discuss justice sector reform issues.

November 2013: UNODC and the World Customs Organization hosted the 2nd

Regional Container Control Program meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean.

1.4 Essential Points to be followed up by the mini-Dublin Groups

Lack of data on the scope of the drug problem is a common theme in Central American countries. Insufficient data on drug consumption and trafficking patterns complicates the ability of governments to appropriately allocate resources. This is particularly relevant with respect to domestic drug use. Resources are needed for demand reduction efforts, but need to be guided by the situation on the ground. Mini-Dublin Groups should look at ways to improve data collection efforts at the national level and ways to compare data at the regional level.

2. Regional or sub-regional nature of the problem

There are several issues that impact most, if not all, nations in Central America with respect to combatting narcotics trafficking. They are: corruption; lack of sufficient resources; lack of political will; and the weakness of criminal justice institutions.

Many countries are not able to adequately implement the anti-corruption measures that they do have. For example, Belize did not initiate any charges under the Prevention of Corruption Act in 2013, and the National Anti-Corruption Council in Honduras has never followed up on any corruption cases. Corrupt actors in the criminal justice system also limit the ability to successfully investigate, prosecute, and convict narcotics traffickers and other organized criminals. Corruption also erodes the public's trust in security and criminal justice institutions.

Countries in Central America also lack adequate resources to fully staff, train, and equip their security and criminal justice agencies. This impacts the ability to conduct complex investigations, and the lack of resources to adequately pay law enforcement and criminal justice officials can lead to the corruption problems cited above. Lack of resources can also cause logjams in the criminal justice system and delay cases. Donors should work with these countries to try to address these gaps in an efficient manner.

Linked closely to the resource issue is the need to strengthen criminal justice institutions. All components in the criminal justice system – law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and corrections – need to be able to effectively work together in order to make progress against organized criminal groups. Often these entities lack the training necessary to tackle complex investigations. Donors are able to provide expertise, but there also needs to be a solid framework within the institutions for change and improvements to take root.

Underlying all of these issues in many cases is a lack of political will. Without a commitment to combating narcotics trafficking and organized crime from the top of the political system, it will be difficult for progress to be made on the ground. It is important that there be commitment throughout the political and criminal justice system to tackling issues such as money laundering, corruption, and organized crime.

More recently, these deficiencies have contributed to rising levels of migration, particularly of unaccompanied children from the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. From FY 2003 to FY 2010, the U.S. government detained an average of nearly 7,000 unaccompanied children per year. Since then, apprehensions have significantly increased, with 20,804 children from these three countries detained in FY 2013, and 51,705 in FY 2014. There are a variety of factors, both driving migrants from Central America as well as pulling them to the United States. The most recent increase of children is strongly correlated to those cities and towns that suffer from high levels of violence in these three countries. Decreasing the violence in these countries will be crucial to addressing an important underlying factor of migration.

3. Matters requiring treatment by the Dublin Group at the central level

An issue that should be considered at the Central Dublin Group level is the “balloon effect.” As progress is made on interdiction and enforcement capabilities in one country or region, traffickers will look for different trafficking routes that present less risk. The Central Dublin Group should work to identify these potential new routes and compare best practices across regions so that donors focus both on regions currently facing significant narcotics trafficking issues, as well as those that will likely face such challenges in the future. In the context of Central America, it is important to link discussions on Central America to those on South America and the Caribbean.

Coordination with SICA

The Central American Integration System (SICA) continued coordination on the regional security strategy developed in 2011, and continued to the effort to hold breakout meetings on specific regional issues affecting all SICA members. In September 2013, SICA and the Government of Guatemala co-hosted a technical workshop on combating the trafficking in precursor chemicals and the manufacture of synthetic drugs in Central America and Mexico. Top level coordination continued in May 2014, when Colombia hosted a meeting of the Security Experts Group (SEG) a forum through which Colombia, the United States, and Mexico support SICA’s implementation of Pillar 1 of their regional strategy, “Combating Crime.”

U.S.-Colombia Action Plan

Supporting SICA’s efforts, the United States and Colombia continued their High Level Strategy Security Dialogue (HLSSD) with a second year of trilateral assistance activities, agreed to in June 2013, in Bogota. In April 2014, U.S. and Colombian officials with roles in Central American diplomacy and foreign assistance met in Miami to conduct working-level meetings on the implementation of the 2014 plan, and develop proposals for the 2015 Action Plan, to be agreed to at a higher level meeting later in the year.

4. Place and date of meetings of mini-Dublin Groups

- 1.3.2. Belize. No formal Dublin Group Meeting.
- 1.3.3. Costa Rica. No formal Dublin Group Meeting.
- 1.3.4. El Salvador. No formal Dublin Group Meeting.
- 1.3.5. Guatemala. No formal Dublin Group Meeting.
- 1.3.6. Honduras. No formal Dublin Group Meeting.
- 1.3.7. Nicaragua. No formal Dublin Group Meeting.
- 1.3.8. Panama. February 2014: Mini-Dublin Group Meeting to discuss justice sector reform issues.

5. Regional Group recommendations/conclusions

Overall, there is a need to strengthen cooperation throughout the region. This includes sharing operational information to further investigations and prosecutions, but also the sharing of best practices and lessons learned so that the entire region can learn from each country's experiences. Specific country recommendations follow:

Belize: In order to strengthen law enforcement institutions, Belize should focus on the professionalization of its law enforcement officers, to include comprehensive background checks, vetting of new and existing personnel, better training, and continuing education programs. Organizational and operational effectiveness are not possible without an investment in the personnel that make up the country's criminal justice organizations. This is particularly relevant in specialized agencies such as the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU). The FIU lacks adequate personnel resources, and the individuals that do work there need more training and experience in identifying, investigating, reviewing, and analyzing evidence in complex money laundering cases. Additional training on financial crimes and money laundering would be valuable throughout the criminal justice system, to include prosecutors and judges.

Costa Rica: Costa Rica should continue to devote more resources to security and criminal justice institutions, particularly the Coast Guard and the Border Police. Costa Rica should also continue to strengthen the internal affairs department and other initiatives to better address corruption within law enforcement agencies. Additionally, Costa Rica should build upon its progress in the reform of its justice sector institutions, particularly the Attorney General's Office, and in the implementation of the police reform, including nationwide implementation of the COMPSTAT police data collection model completed in May, 2014.

El Salvador – The Government of El Salvador should continue to show leadership on crime prevention, security, and rule of law issues, as well as devote more resources to the national police. El Salvador has made encouraging advances in community policing reform and gang prevention in targeted municipalities with the assistance of international donors – these best practices should be mainstreamed within national police and justice sector institutions. Finally, El Salvador's passage of civil asset forfeiture legislation in 2013 should continue to form a foundation for greater efforts to combat money laundering and comply with international best practices in this area.

Guatemala – Guatemala should work to improve public confidence in government institutions by fully implementing its laws, including civil asset forfeiture laws, providing adequate financial support to law enforcement and criminal justice organizations, reforming the law enforcement culture to increase public confidence in criminal justice institutions, and professionalizing the judicial system. Guatemala has made encouraging advances in community policing reform and gang prevention in targeted municipalities with the assistance of international donors – these best practices should be mainstreamed within national police and justice sector institutions.

Honduras – Honduras should continue the process of institutionalizing reform within its security and justice institutions, with a focus on the development of a professional, capable and Honduran National Police under civilian control. Major advances have been made in specialized, “vetted units” with the support of international donors, but the professionalism, advanced capabilities, accountability, and anti-corruption measures incorporated into the structure of these units should be mainstreamed throughout the Honduran security ministry. Honduras should also work to improve the transparency, accountability, and performance of justice sector institutions, including prosecutors and judges. The government of Honduras should also prioritize community policing efforts and outreach to communities at risk.

Nicaragua – Nicaragua should continue to make combatting narcotics trafficking and organized crime a priority across government institutions, maintain the independence of civilian law enforcement, and promote full inclusion of marginalized communities on the remote Atlantic Coast who are vulnerable to risk of infiltration by transnational criminal networks.

Panama – Panama should devote more resources to the modernization of its justice sector institutions to bolster citizen security. Panama should continue to invest in the ongoing transition from an inquisitorial to an accusatory justice system, the implementation of a COMPSTAT police data collection model, and should continue its regional leadership role in providing trainers and subject matter experts to neighboring Central American countries.

5.1 Political Initiatives

SICA

At the Security Experts Group in Bogota, Colombia the week of May 5th, 2014, SICA countries met with representatives of the United States, Mexico, Colombia, and international financial institutions including the Inter-American Development Bank to discuss adopting common goals and indicators for measuring the success of SICA's regional security strategy. Participants in the meeting agreed to prioritize more updated mapping of various assistance activities underway in Central America, and committed to the eight macro indicators developed during technical meetings held February 25-26: 1) homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants; 2) victimization rate for people over 18 years of age; 3) percentage of population expressing trust in the security and justice sectors; 4) injury rate against women per 100,000; 5) rate of youth in conflict with the law per 100,000; 6) percentage of recidivism among those who have been previously incarcerated; 7) impunity rate measured by rate of crime resolution; 8) level of regional integration among SICA member states.

OAS Special General Assembly

At the OAS Special General Assembly in Guatemala, on September 19th, the OAS adopted a resolution entitled, "Reflections and Guidelines to Formulate and Follow Up on Comprehensive Policies to Address the World Drug Problem in the Americas." This resolution will be sent to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the President of the United Nations General Assembly as the Western Hemisphere's contribution to preparations for the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Drugs in 2016. The resolution upholds the importance of implementation of the three drug control conventions and emphasizes the importance of an evidence-based public health approach to drug policy, the need for proportionality in sentencing for drug-related offenses, and the importance of working together to combat transnational organized crime.

United States – Colombia Action Plan

During meetings held throughout 2013 and in April, 2014 in Miami, U.S. and Colombian officials working in Central America met to agree upon an action plan of trilateral assistance activities to coordinate both nations' support to Central America. Delegations finalized follow-up activities for the second year of this partnership in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama, and developed initial plans to expand this coordination mechanism to Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic.

Addressing Unaccompanied Child Migration

The United States continues to realign foreign assistance funding to address unaccompanied child migration, prioritizing investigation of transnational criminal organizations involved in human trafficking and enhanced law enforcement, youth crime prevention, and government services in at-risk, underserved communities. The United States will continue the expansion of community policing efforts, anti-corruption programming, greater focus on the investigation of domestic and family violence, and professionalization of police and prosecutors, and will prioritize the migration issue in regional and international discussions of the challenges facing Central America.

5.2 Donor community priorities

5.2.1 Regional

EU

In July 2014, the EU issued a new “Strategy on Citizen Security in Central America and the Caribbean.” The strategy focuses on strengthening institutions and the role of law in the region, as well as protection of human rights.

The objectives of the strategy are:

- 1) Further develop a shared citizen security agenda with the region
- 2) Strengthen the ability of governments to deliver quality public services
- 3) Fostering regional and international cooperation on operational activities in order to fight insecurity in Central America and the Caribbean

Next steps will include a mapping exercise and the development of an action plan.

United States

U.S. assistance and counternarcotics activities in Central America are guided by The Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), which includes Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. The five goals of CARSI are:

- 1) Create safe streets for the citizens of the region;
- 2) Disrupt the movement of criminals and contraband to, within, and between the nations of Central America;
- 3) Support the development of strong, capable, and accountable Central American governments;
- 4) Re-establish effective state presence, services and security in communities at risk; and
- 5) Foster enhanced levels of coordination and cooperation between the nations of the region, other international partners, and donors to combat regional security threats.

CARSI activities are coordinated with other donors, international financial institutions, the private sector, civil society, and the SICA. Key priorities under CARSI include: assistance to law enforcement agencies; capacity building for criminal justice institutions; community policing; gang prevention; and programming for at-risk youth.

5.2.2 Belize

U.S. priorities for programming in Belize include professionalization of the police, border security, and anti-gang programming. For example, the United States has assisted the Government of Belize in establishing a Mobile Interdiction Team (MIT), which includes members of the country's Immigration and Nationality Department, Customs and Excise Department, and Police Department. The focus of the MIT is to interdict narcotics at ports of entry.

5.2.3 Costa Rica

U.S. priorities for programming in Costa Rica include strengthening law enforcement institutions, capacity building in the criminal justice sector to better handle investigation and prosecution of complex crimes, border security, and creating safe communities. In 2013 and 2014, the United States worked with Costa Rica to update the police academy curriculum and supported the creation of a Border Police Force. In 2014, a multi-year effort implemented by Florida International University completed its work to reform and modernize the Attorney General's Office.

5.2.4 El Salvador

In El Salvador, U.S. assistance supports government efforts to interdict narcotics, combat money laundering, and prosecute public corruption. Programs help ensure that actions taken by criminal justice agencies are undertaken within a transparent system that respects human and civil rights. Anti-gang and community policing efforts in targeted "Model Police Precincts" have succeeded in lowering crime rates in a localized manner, but these reforms must be expanded nationwide to have a sustainable impact.

5.2.5 Guatemala

U.S. assistance programs work to help enable the Government of Guatemala to more effectively combat criminal organizations and transnational crimes. This is accomplished by providing technical assistance, equipment, and training to Guatemala's police, military, and judicial agencies. A significant step in this process was the nationalization of the aviation interdiction program, through the transfer of title and operation control of six UH-1H helicopters to the Government of Guatemala in September 2013. Anti-gang and community policing efforts in targeted "Model Police Precincts" have succeeded in lowering crime rates in a localized manner, but these reforms must be expanded nationwide to have a sustainable impact.

5.2.6 Honduras

U.S. priorities for programming in Honduras include strengthening institutions to better counter transnational criminal organizations and improve citizen security. These programs focus on professionalism, respect for human rights, and accountability. The United States works with Colombia and Chile to provide training to the national police, Public Ministry and the Supreme Court. In addition, the United States supports Honduran government efforts to improve transparency and reduce corruption in the national police.

5.2.7 Nicaragua

Nicaragua worked with several donors in 2013 on counternarcotics programming. Russia provided training for 117 Nicaraguan special agents under a cooperative agreement. Spain provided funds for drug treatment programs, which included vocational training for 220 youth to help recovering drug addicts reintegrate into society. The EU signed an agreement with Nicaragua through 2020 that included \$13.7 million to support crime prevention projects. However, concerns about fiscal transparency caused the United States to redirect some counternarcotics assistance from the Government of Nicaragua to non-governmental drug demand reduction programs.

5.2.8 Panama

U.S. priorities for programming in Panama include increasing citizen security, border security, and the professionalization of police institutions. For example, the United States is providing training to the Panamanian National Border Service through the Regional Border Protection Training Program. This training includes a “train-the-trainer” component, and Panama has begun to offer training to regional partners such as Costa Rica, Belize, and Honduras. The United States also works with Colombia to provide training to across the criminal justice sector. The United States also supports UNODC’s Regional Anti-Corruption Academy, which delivered 22 courses and trained 730 participants from Latin America in 2013. Recently, the United States has been able to focus some of its programming on more advanced areas, such as project management, institutionalizing training in law enforcement agencies, and developing better interagency coordination.