

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADAPP	Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme
CAPA	Crime and Problem Analysis Branch
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCITS	Caribbean Counterdrug Intelligence Training School
CCM	Case Care Management
CICAD	Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission
CND	Commission on Narcotic Drugs
CSO	Central Statistical Office
COPOLAD	Cooperation Programme between Latin America, Caribbean and the European Union on Drugs and Policies
DINTT	Drug Information Network of Trinidad and Tobago
DTC	Drug Treatment Court
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EWS	Early Warning System
FIB	Financial Investigations Branch
FIUTT	Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago

LIST OF ACRONYMS

FOCTALI	Strengthening Therapeutic Communities in Latin America
GENLEA	Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies
INCB	International Narcotics Control Board
ICT	Information Communications Technology
MDMA	Methylenedioxyamphetamine
MEM	Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism
NADAPP	National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme
NCE	National Coordinating Entity
NDC	National Drug Council
NDS	National Development Strategy
NPS	New Psychoactive Substances
OAS	Organisation of American States
SIU	Special Investigations Unit
SSA	Strategic Services Agency
TOCU	Transnational Organised Crime Unit

LIST OF ACRONYMS

UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UPC	Universal Prevention Curriculum
USC	University of Southern Caribbean
YTC	Youth Training Centre

FOREWORD

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past year, it is with great pleasure that I present the Annual Report of the National Drug Council of Trinidad and Tobago for 2023. It encapsulates the activities of the Council for 2023 and its projections for 2024.

One of the key highlights for the National Drug Council (NDC) in 2023 was its rebranding to the National Drug Council of Trinidad and Tobago (NDCTT). The rationale behind the rebranding points to the need to symbolize the importance of strengthening collaboration with key stakeholders on a national scale to effectively address drug related issues. It also highlights the flexibility envisioned for expected environmental changes.

Therefore, as we embark on the year 2024, we remain guided by the Mandate of the Council and the commitment to ensuring that the National Operational Plan for Drug Control 2021 to 2025 is effectively monitored to ensure that its objectives are achieved through strengthened collaboration with its stakeholders.

We acknowledge the extraordinary efforts made by all members of the National Drug Council Secretariat, and their support towards ensuring that work of the Council is achieved. Together we will continue to strive for excellence and drive change in policies and programmes that will enhance drug control initiatives in Trinidad and Tobago.

Chair

Jennifer Boucaud-Blake

OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL

Establishment of the National Drug Council

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on July 05, 2000, by Cabinet Minute #1231 established the National Drug Council. This was in alignment with the internationally recommended structure for a national entity with responsibility for overseeing the implementation of all aspects of drug control.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago established the Council with primary responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of the various Anti-Drug Plans;
- Advising on policy;
- Liaising with local and regional stakeholders and the international community;
- Coordinating activities which require contributions from principal agencies.

The Cabinet approved Mandate is attached at **Appendix I**.

Membership of the National Drug Council

The Council comprise the highest decision-makers in agencies with responsibility for Drug Control. The Council inclusive of a Chair has thirteen (13) representatives from: Ministries, drug demand and supply reduction agencies, non-governmental agencies (NGO), the Tobago House of Assembly (THA), and the business community. The current membership of the Council is attached at **Appendix II**.

In 2023 the Council experienced the following changes in representation:

- Ms. Erla Harewood- Christopher replaced Mr, Mc Donald Jacob as Commissioner of Police;
- Ms. Lisa Ifill replaced Mr. Michael Reid as the Representative of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services; and
- Ms. Neela Birjah replaced Mr. Jefferson Jurawan from Rebirth House.

OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL

Meetings of the National Drug Council

In 2023 the Council convened ten (10) meetings, with the following attendance recorded by members.

REPRESENTATIVE/AGENCY ON THE COUNCIL	NUMBER OF MEETINGS ATTENDED	NUMBER OF MEETINGS EXCUSED
Chair	10	
Director of Public Prosecution	1	7
Commissioner of Police	7	3
Executive Director, National Security Council Secretariat	10	
Director, SSA	7	3
Director (Ag.), Financial Intelligence Unit (FIUTT)	6	4
Comptroller of Customs and Excise	6	4
Director, Multilateral Relations, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs	4	6
Coordinator, NADAPP	9	1
Representative of the THA-Coordinator, Planning, and Development, Tobago House of Assembly	4	6
Vice Chairman, Rebirth House	7	1
CEO, Rebirth House	2	
President, National Council on Alcohol & Other Addictions	8	2
Representative, Chamber of Industry & Commerce	0	7
Representative of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services- Director (Ag.), Social Planning and Research	8	

OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL

The National Drug Council Secretariat

The NDC Secretariat was established in 2001 to implement the decisions of the Council, and to undertake all activities in fulfilment of the Council's Mandate. It functions as the operational arm of the Council.

The current staff positions are:

- Manager
- Programme Officer
- Research Specialist
- Research Assistant
- Business Operations Assistant II
- Business Operations Assistant I
- Driver / Courier

It is noteworthy, however, that the Programme Officer position is currently vacant.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Drug Council of Trinidad and Tobago's Annual Report for 2023 reflects its achievements, challenges, and strategic advancements. Throughout the year, it remained committed to monitoring the implementation of the National Drug Policy and the Operational Plan for Drug Control in Trinidad and Tobago 2021 to 2025 as one of its core Mandate.

The NDCTT Secretariat noted the importance of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in the implementation of the Operational Plan and determined there was a need for training in Monitoring and Evaluation for the stakeholders on the thematic pillars. This training was coordinated in collaboration with the National Transformation Unit, Ministry of Planning in 2023. The overall objective of the workshop was to strengthen the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) capacity among stakeholder agencies to ensure efficiency in the monitoring of the National Drug Plan 2021-2025.

NDCTT as the National Coordinating Entity (NCE) coordinated Trinidad and Tobago's response to the 2023 iteration of the 8th round of the MEM, that is, Institutional Strengthening ; Research, information, Monitoring, and Evaluation; and International Cooperation 2023. To date Trinidad and Tobago has collected and completed the responses of the 2021, 2022 and 2023 iterations of the 8th round of the MEM and successfully submitted it to the MEM Unit of the OAS/CICAD.

In 2023 the National Drug Council (NDC) was rebranded to the National Drug Council of Trinidad and Tobago (NDCTT). The rationale behind the rebranding points to the need to symbolise the importance of strengthening collaboration with key stakeholders on a national scale to effectively address drug related issues. It also highlights the flexibility envisioned for expected environmental changes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NDC continued the operational development of the Drug Information Network of Trinidad and Tobago (DIN-TT). This included convening the Technical Committee and Stakeholder group quarterly meetings. The DIN-TT was able to publish its 9th Annual Report in 2023.

NDCTT as the National Coordinating Entity (NCE) coordinated Trinidad and Tobago's response to the 2023 iteration of the 8th round of the MEM, that is, Institutional Strengthening ; Research, information, Monitoring, and Evaluation; and International Cooperation 2023. To date Trinidad and Tobago has collected and completed the responses of the 2021, 2022 and 2023 iterations of the 8th round of the MEM and successfully submitted it to the MEM Unit of the OAS/CICAD.

The NDC facilitated the observance and recognition of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. With the support of stakeholders on the Planning Committee, it launched a programme, supporting the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals, putting people first entitled "Liming with a Purpose". "Liming with a Purpose" was launched on June 26, 2023.

For 2023, a number of workshops, webinars and trainings were held with international partners, namely OAS/CICAD and COPOLAD that provided training and information opportunities for participants in drug-related matters. These cemented existing relationships, established new working relationships, and expanded the institutional knowledge of the NDC and its stakeholder agencies.

In addition, to these key highlights, this Annual Report will shed light on other areas of accomplishment according to the varying thematic areas of the Operational Plan for Drug Control in Trinidad and Tobago.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome to the highlights section of our Annual Report, where we reflect on another year of progress and achievement. As we navigate through the pages ahead, we invite you to explore the following key milestones and successes:

1. Rebranding of the National Drug Council (NDC)
2. Coordination of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM)
3. Commemoration of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
4. Continued monitoring and implementation of the National Drug Policy 2021 and Operational Plan for Drug Control 2021-2025

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

1. Rebranding of the NDC



In 2023 the National Drug Council (NDC) was rebranded to the National Drug Council of Trinidad and Tobago (NDCTT). The rationale behind the rebranding points to the need to symbolise the importance of strengthening collaboration with key stakeholders on a national scale to effectively address drug related issues. It also highlights the flexibility envisioned for expected environmental changes.

The addition of the TT in the rebranding of the NDC illustrates Trinidad and Tobago's identity, standing strong together with regional, hemispheric and international agencies to effectively address issues related to drug control.

The choice of the solid colours of red, white and black on the letters 'TT' was used to depict the pillars that the National Drug Council (NDC) stands on to effectively coordinate, monitor and evaluate the successful implementation of the National Drug Plan for Trinidad and Tobago.

Following the creation and development of the new NDCTT logo it was launched at the Annual NDC, "Pillar Talk, Pillar Share" meeting; on January 11, 2023 at Cascadia Hotel.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

2. Coordination of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM)

The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) is an instrument designed to measure the progress of actions taken by the member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) to address the hemispheric drug problem and other related crimes. The MEM is a diagnostic tool, designed by all member states of the Organization of American States (OAS), to periodically undertake comprehensive, multilateral evaluations on the implementation status of the twenty eight (28) objectives and corresponding priority actions spanning five thematic areas of the Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs of the OAS. As part of the Secretariat of Multidimensional Security (SMS), the InterAmerican Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) is the specialized agency within the (OAS) responsible for drug control and by extension, the implementation of this Mechanism.

The MEM as an evaluation instrument has evolved as a valuable source of information on the progress achieved by the individual and collective efforts of the governments of the OAS member states, thus strengthening hemispheric cooperation, promoting dialogue among governmental authorities of member states and optimizing resources by precisely channeling assistance to areas requiring greater attention. Trinidad and Tobago as a member of the OAS has been an active participant of the MEM since its inception.

The MEM is built on three institutions which are charged with the various functions of the Mechanism:

- Inter-governmental Working Group (IWG)
- National Coordinating Entity (NCE)
- Governmental Expert Group (GEG)

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Inter-governmental Working Group (IWG)

The IWG is convened by the CICAD Commissioners and is comprised of delegates from member states, who are responsible for updating and improving the MEM process and its operational features, based on the current Hemispheric Drug Strategy and Plan of Action. The IWG considers prior MEM evaluation documents before drafting the new thematic evaluation questionnaires, procedural manual, evaluator's manual, and a calendar of activities, for the corresponding round.

Trinidad and Tobago actively participated as the NCE and on the GEG.

National Coordinating Entity (NCE)

The National Drug Council (NDC), was designated as Trinidad and Tobago's National Coordinating Entity (NCE) in its Mandate approved by Cabinet Minute #1231 dated July 05, 2000. In this role it has responsibility for distributing the questionnaire to the relevant agencies, following up and compiling the responses from stakeholder agencies, then submitting the completed questionnaire to the MEM Unit. In addition, to completing the questionnaire, the NCE provides clarification to the GEG on any issues that are raised during their initial review of the documents.

The NCE coordinated with the various stakeholders who operate within these pillars under consideration, collected and collated the data received and submitted to the MEM Unit CICAD. The "notes to country" were reviewed by the NCE and clarified responses submitted for the consideration of the GEG and completion of the country report.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Governmental Expert Group (GEG)

The Governmental Expert Group (GEG) is composed of Experts from the diverse drug-related areas, designated by each participating member state. Experts will be designated on a yearly basis according to the thematic area for the given year. For the comprehensive evaluation year, countries can designate an expert from any of the various drug-related areas. For this iteration of the eighth round the Manager and the Research Specialist successfully performed the duties of the GEG.

The MEM now in its eighth round has developed a questionnaire which was divided into the following three thematic areas:

- Measures of Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support, 2021;
- Measures to Control and Counter the Illicit Cultivation, Production, Trafficking, and Distribution of Drugs, and to Address their Causes and Consequences, 2022; and
- Institutional Strengthening; Research, Information, Monitoring and Evaluation; and International Cooperation, 2023.

To date Trinidad and Tobago has collected and completed the responses of the 2021, 2022 and 2023 iterations of the 8th round of the MEM and successfully submitted it to the MEM Unit of the OAS/CICAD.

There will be a Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) information update form for the period 2019 to 2024 on all thematic areas in the first quarter of 2024.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

3. Commemoration of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) recognizes the importance of taking a people-centered approach to drug policies, with a focus on human rights, compassion, and evidence-based practices, as such the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, or World Drug Day, is commemorated on 26 June annually. Its intent is to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve a world free of drug abuse. The campaign for 2023 with its theme **“People first: stop stigma and discrimination, strengthen prevention”** was aimed at raising awareness on the importance of treating people who use drugs with respect and empathy; providing evidence-based, voluntary services for all; offering alternatives to punishment; prioritizing prevention; and leading with compassion. The campaign also aimed at combating stigma and discrimination against people who use drugs through the promotion of jargon and attitudes that are respectful and non-judgmental.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

In that regard the NDCTT in commemoration of the UNODC International Day created and launched a programme geared at putting people first entitled “Liming with a Purpose”. “Liming with a Purpose” was launched on June 26, 2023 and targeted approximately seventy-five (75) stakeholders inclusive of Government Ministers and Permanent Secretaries from select Government Ministries, the Diplomatic Corp, members of the business community, Chairmen and Councilors of targeted communities, as well as youth representatives. Stakeholders were presented with an overview of the programme and its intended implementation methods.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

This programme will provide a platform for young persons between the ages 16 to 25 to be engaged, informed, educated and empowered to become active and contributing members within their communities while also forming networks with their peers toward drug prevention and the promotion of a drug free community. This programme would also utilize a ground-up approach to engage, and be sensitized by the youth on the issues surrounding drug control in communities. It is an opportunity for young people including the at risk youth to be engaged by their peers, share their experiences and their needs in creating the change they wish to see in their environment with respect to drug control. It is also a pathway to increase awareness about the National Drug Council of Trinidad and Tobago. This initiative will be completed in 2024.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

4. The National Drug Policy 2021 and Operational Plan for Drug Control 2021-2025

The National Drug Policy and Operational Plan for Drug Control was developed in consultation with key stakeholders from both government and non-government agencies, and takes into consideration the operational plans of relevant government ministries, agencies and key entities.

The Operational Plan for Drug Control in Trinidad and Tobago 2021-2025 gives effect to the National Drug Policy (NDP) 2021 and guides the implementation of coordinated interventions which contribute to the reduction of the harms caused by trafficking in illicit drugs, and related criminal activities, as well as substance use and misuse disorders.

The National Drug Policy 2021 and Operational Plan for Drug Control 2021-2025 was approved by Cabinet in February of 2021. The Operational Plan consists of five (5) thematic Pillars: Control Measures, Supply Reduction, Demand Reduction, Research and Institutional Strengthening and International Cooperation.

The NDCTT Secretariat continued to operate as liaisons within the various thematic areas to ensure the execution of the objectives of the plan.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

The Steering Committee for the Operational Plan for Drug Control for Trinidad and Tobago

The Steering Committee is tasked with guiding the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Operational Plan 2021-2025 of Trinidad and Tobago. Primarily, the Steering Committee was established to provide oversight and guidance for the efficient implementation of the Action Plans of the various Pillars, and increase the opportunities for policy and programme success through close alignment with the organizational goals of all stakeholders. The Steering Committee comprised the following representatives:

- All Pillar Leads and Co-Leads
- A member of the National Drug Council
- A representative of the Tobago House of Assembly
- A representative of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit- MNS
- A representative of the Corporate Communications Unit – MNS
- A representative of the NGO Community

The Steering Committee is to have four (4) scheduled meetings annually, however the Steering Committee hosted two (2) meetings in 2023.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Monitoring and Evaluation Training

The NDCTT Secretariat noted the importance of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in the implementation of the Operational Plan and as such determined there was a need for a training in Monitoring and Evaluation for the stakeholders on the thematic pillars. The training was hosted on September 08, 2023.



The overall objective of the workshop was to strengthen the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) capacity among stakeholder agencies to ensure efficiency in the monitoring of the National Drug Plan 2021-2025. The workshop aimed to:

- Guide participants in developing the logic framework for the implementation of the Operational Plan for Drug Control in Trinidad and Tobago (2021-2025)
- Provide participants with an understanding of M&E; and
- Provide participants with an understanding of how to plan, design, and implement a results-framework for improved performance management.

It is anticipated that in 2024, the Results Framework for each thematic area of the National Drug Plan 2021 to 2025 will be completed.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2023

Through its Secretariat, the National Drug Council continued to undertake activities and programmes in accordance with its Mandate. For the year 2023, the following areas were prioritized:

Control Measures:

- Early Warning System (EWS);
- Regional Training Course on the Control of Illicit Drug Trafficking for Female Officers; and
- Pre Cursor Chemical Legislation.

Supply Reduction:

The NDC continued to serve as the point of contact for Supply Reduction sectors locally, regionally and in the hemisphere. The following were experienced in supply reduction activities:

- Joint interdiction exercises with regional and international counterparts;
- Cross border cooperation and joint investigations operations at local, regional and international levels for the monitoring of new trends in the illicit supply of drugs; and
- Training sessions in counterdrug intelligence.

Demand Reduction:

- Participation in the Substance Use Prevention Working Group
- Employee Wellness Programme

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2023

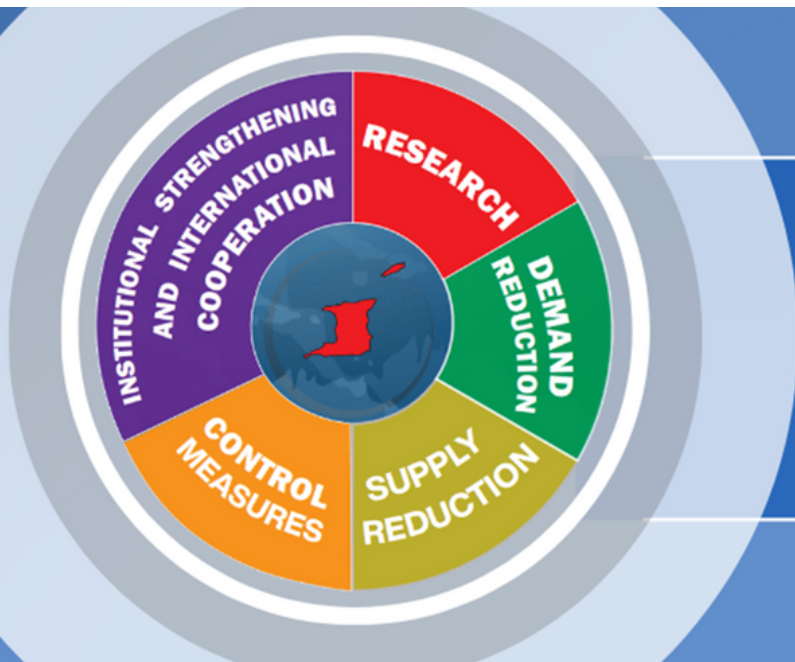
Research:

- Drug Information Network of Trinidad and Tobago (DIN-TT)
- Rapid Situational Assessment on Drug Use in Trinidad and Tobago
- Assessment on Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies in Trinidad and Tobago
- National Drug Observatory :
- “Strengthening of National Systems and Networks of Scientific Research on drugs and Development of a National Research Agenda”

Institutional Strengthening and International Cooperation

- Membership on the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)
- Tobago Steering Committee on Drugs
- Group of Experts on Maritime Narco-Trafficking
- Case Care Management

Each of these areas listed will be fully discussed in the subsequent Chapters.



CONTROL MEASURES

1.1 Early Warning System (EWS) of Trinidad and Tobago

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago by Cabinet in September, 2017, agreed that an EWS for Drugs be established by the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC) as part of COPOLAD II. ITAC continued to host quarterly meetings of the Early Warning System Working Group, with a total of four (4) meetings being held virtually in 2023. In addition, the National Drug Council Secretariat continued to Chair the Sub-Committee I, with responsibility to assess the risk and issue the alert. In 2023, the sub-committee focused on reviewing and drafting the Monitoring and Evaluation tool for the issuance of local alerts. This tool will be incorporated into the Manual for guiding the issuance of alerts. It is anticipated that this tool will be finalized in the first quarter of 2024.

In addition, Trinidad and Tobago participated in the following seminars and training hosted by the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID), CICAD:

- Seminar on EWS

The Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID), CICAD hosted a training seminar on EWS from March 22-23, 2023 in Colombia. Ms. Amanda Moses Ferreira from the Forensic Sciences Centre attended this seminar. It facilitated a detailed discussion of emerging drug threats among participating countries, to share the role and functions of their national EWS, identify challenges and needs, and identify ways to strengthen the Early Warning System on Drugs for the Americas (known as SATA by its Spanish acronym).

CICAD's Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID) Unit also hosted a seminar on EWS in San Salvador, El Salvador during the period July 11 to July 13, 2023. Mr. Anthony Rosales, Chair of the EWS-TT represented Trinidad and Tobago.

The seminar addressed how countries develop and use national EWS to detect, assess, and respond to new psychoactive substances, opioids, and other emerging drug threats.

The seminar also presented an opportunity to showcase El Salvador as an example of a country with a recently established EWS that has achieved relative success in a short period of time. The event also included sessions with expert trainers, lessons learned from other countries and a tour of a laboratory facility that supports the Salvadorian EWS. At this seminar Mr. Anthony Rosales, Manager of ITAC and Chair of the EWS-TT represented Trinidad and Tobago and presented on the country's EWS-TT as an example for countries in the Region.

- Workshop on National Drug Observatories (NDO) and Early Warning System (EWS): “Analytical capacity of the national Early Warning Systems and the National Drug Observatories: updates and new perspectives”

CICAD, Inter-American Observatory on Drugs Unit (OID) hosted a workshop on NDO and EWS in Santiago, Chile from April 25 to 27, 2023. It sought to strengthen the technical capacity of NDOs and support the development and strengthening of national EWSs on drugs. It involved international experts from the Caribbean, Europe and Latin America who shared their knowledge and experience with participants. Mr. Anthony Rosales, Manager of ITAC and Chair of the EWS-TT and Ms. Sarah Look Loy, Research Specialist, National Drug Council attended this Workshop.

1.2 Pre Cursor Chemical Legislation

In 2023, the NDC Secretariat through the Legal Department, Ministry of National Security continued to pursue this matter with the Minister of National Security. The Minister approved the Brief submitted which provided a justification for the pursuance of the legislation. Therefore stakeholders were invited to be engaged and it is anticipated that in the first quarter of 2024, comments will be received from stakeholders to advance this matter.

1.3 Regional Training Course on the Control of Illicit Drug Trafficking for Female Officers

The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the Organization of American States (CICAD/OAS) within the framework of activities of the Caribbean Counterdrug Intelligence Training School (CCITS) hosted a 'Regional Training Course on the Control of Illicit Drug Trafficking', from June 12 to 16, 2023, at the Trinidad and Tobago Police Training Academy.

The course was conducted within the context of the Inter-American Program for Strengthening Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies (GENLEA). The training targeted female officers who perform counterdrug tasks at the operational level ideally in the maritime/port domain. The Regional Training Course on the Control of Illicit Drug Trafficking enhanced the skills of ten (10) female officers in Trinidad and Tobago thereby strengthening the capacity of competent authorities involved in counter-drug trafficking.





2.1 The NDC's participation in the Substance Use Prevention Working Group

The Substance Use Prevention Working Group is chaired by the National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADAPP) and Co-Chaired by the NDC Secretariat. The purpose of the Substance Use Prevention Working Group is to provide a structured and guided approach to drug prevention activities in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, to develop consistent messages and methodologies for monitoring and evaluation. The National Drug Council Secretariat continued to participate in the quarterly meetings of the working group in 2023. Two (2) meetings of the Working Group was hosted in 2023.

2.2 Employee Wellness Programme

In 2023, the National Drug Council continued to engage NADAPP, Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour on the development of a Draft National Employee Wellness Policy. The National Employee Wellness Policy is intended to be developed as a National Guide for employers to address substance abuse in the workplace. At present, a policy on this subject matter is absent in Trinidad and Tobago. However, individual firms particularly in the private sector will have their own policies in place to treat with such matters. Therefore, it is envisioned that this will promote a successful integration of prevention and treatment messages into standard health and wellness programs. Representatives of NADAPP and the NDC continue to collaborate with the Ministry of Labour in the development of the Employee Wellness Policy in Trinidad and Tobago.



3.1 .Drug Information Network of Trinidad and Tobago (DIN-TT)

The NDC continued to streamline the operations of the DIN-TT. In 2023, the DIN-TT published its 9th Annual Report. In addition, three technical committee and stakeholder group meetings were hosted respectively. The representation at the Stakeholder meetings remained over 75% and continued to be used as a forum to share information. In 2023, the following presentations were delivered at the stakeholder meetings:

- Presentation by Mr. Dylan Marin, Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (FIUTT) on the Trends in Drug Trafficking cases as suspected in Suspicious Transaction Reports/Suspicious Activity Reports;
- Presentation by Ms. Hasine Shaikh, Chief Public Defender, Legal Aid and Advisory Authority on the work of the Public Defenders Department, its strategic goals and the services it provides; and
- Presentation by Ms. Asha Edmund, Research Assistant, National Drug Council Secretariat, Summary Trends on the DINTT Annual Report 2022.

A list of the DINTT stakeholders is attached at Appendix III.

3.2 Rapid Situational Assessment (RSA)

The NDCTT at its April 2023 meeting approved the conduct of a RSA of Drug Use in Trinidad and Tobago as an Interim Study to the National Consumption Study. This assessment aims to quickly gather and analyze information about drug-related issues in specific target populations including University Students, University Administrators, Employees, Treatment Administrators, Past Treatment Clients, Drug Supply Reduction/Control Measures Operational/Intelligence Officers.

Its objective is to identify emerging trends, assess risks, and inform effective intervention strategies, public health initiatives and law enforcement efforts, especially since the decriminalization of Marijuana in 2019.

This RSA is aligned with the Operational Plan for Drug Control in Trinidad and Tobago 2021 to 2025.

The NDCTT and the National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADAPP) collaborated in 2023 to plan this project through the convening of a technical working group permitting both agencies to collaborate using their technical resources to ensure the success of this initiative. The RSA will be launched in the first quarter of 2024.

We are confident that this initiative will provide valuable information that will justify a future National Consumption Survey, which has been outstanding and continuously requested by our international partners.

CICAD'S PROJECT COLLABORATION

3.3 Assessment on Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies in Trinidad and Tobago

NDCTT in collaboration with the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the Organization of American States (OAS/CICAD) launched an Assessment on Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies in Trinidad and Tobago on November 09, 2023.

The Inter-American Program for Strengthening Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies (GENLEA/CICAD), aims at strengthening member states' capacities for dismantling criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking, by emphasizing gender mainstreaming as a factor that helps improve the effectiveness of counterdrug operations. Under the GENLEA Program, a Plan of Action for Trinidad and Tobago was drafted for the Strengthening of Gender Equality in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies. Therefore, this assessment is a key initiative under this Plan of Action. The survey was designed by the OAS/CICAD to gather valuable insights from employees at all levels, enabling a better understanding of experiences, perspectives, and needs of individuals across various genders. Counterdrug Units in the following agencies were identified to participate in the exercise to permit the collation and analysis of the information received for incorporation into a Report:

- Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force
- Trinidad and Tobago Police Service
- Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service
- Customs and Excise Division

It is anticipated that the Report on this Assessment will be completed in the first quarter of 2024.

COPOLAD III PROJECT COLLABORATION

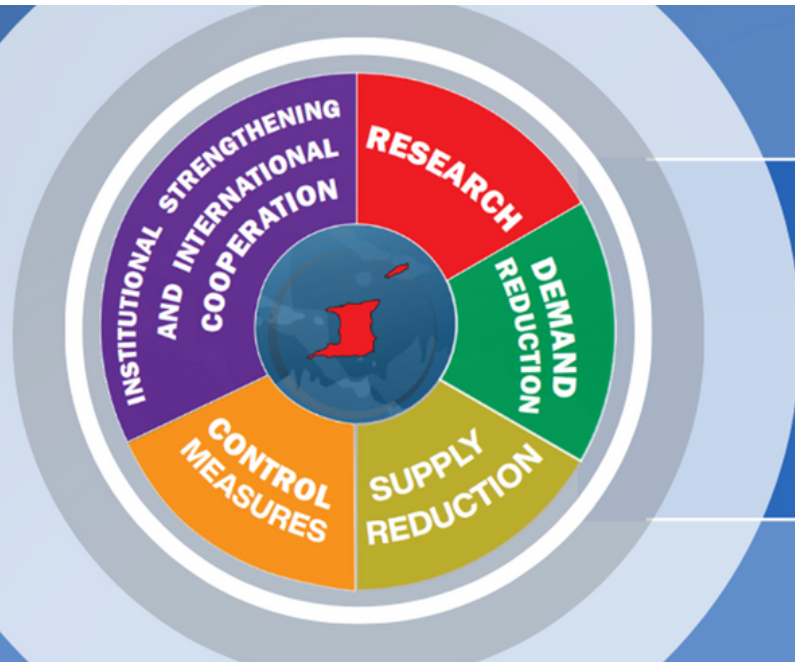
3.4 National Drug Observatory :

“Strengthening of National Systems and Networks of Scientific Research on drugs and Development of a National Research Agenda”

The National Drug Council Secretariat of Trinidad and Tobago (NDCTT), Ministry of National Security, with the technical support of the Cooperation Programmed between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on drug policies (COPOLAD) embarked on an exercise to map the financial, human and institutional resources for research on drugs in Trinidad and Tobago. This exercise will aid with the organization of a national research network and the development of a national research agenda on drugs.

COPOLAD hosted a series of webinars to provide tools for the process of identifying the human, institutional and financial resources involved in research on the drug situation in each country.

The experts provided initial forms for completion to initiate the process which comprised of an evaluation of the research capacity of the National Drug Observatory and that of its stakeholders. These assessments were completed and will aid in identifying the human, institutional and financial resources involved in research on the drug situation in Trinidad and Tobago. This project is to be completed in 2024.



**INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

4.1 Membership on the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)

At the 64th meeting of the CND Trinidad and Tobago was elected for a four year period commencing January 01, 2022 and ending December 31, 2025. Trinidad and Tobago is the only CARICOM and English-speaking country from the region in this round. However, in 2023 the National Drug Council sought the Minister of National Security's approval to recommend to Cabinet Trinidad and Tobago's Candidature for election to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) for the 2026 to 2029 term. Once approved by Cabinet in 2024 the National Drug Council will collaborate with the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs to lobby members for their votes for the membership of Trinidad and Tobago. If re-elected, Trinidad and Tobago will remain the only English-speaking country from the region.

4.2 Group of Experts on Maritime Narco-Trafficking

NDCTT sought and received Cabinet approval for Trinidad and Tobago to Chair the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission's (CICAD's) Group of Experts in Maritime Narco-trafficking for the period, 2023-2024. This appointment was effected following member's approval at the CICAD 74th Regular Session in December, 2023. As Chair, Trinidad and Tobago will host the Annual Meeting of CICAD's Group of Experts on Maritime Narcotrafficking in collaboration with CICAD in 2024.

4.3 Case Care Management (CCM)

The NDCTT continued to follow up on the activities of the CCM Pilot Project, which was completed in 2023 with a graduation that was hosted in September 2023 for the CCM clients. A total of twenty two (22) persons graduated.

4.4 Tobago Steering Committee

The NDCTT continued to follow up on the activities of the Tobago Steering Committee. There were changes in the Chairmanship and additions to the composition of the Steering Committee in 2023.

4.5 Caribbean Youth Forum on Drug Use Prevention

The Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (ES-CICAD) of the OAS invited Trinidad and Tobago to nominate two (2) representatives to participate in their second Caribbean Youth Forum on Drug Use Prevention which was hosted during the period July 31, August 04, 2023 in Nassau, Bahamas. The NDCTT coordinated the representation with the Ministry of Youth Development and Family Services for nominee from Trinidad and another from Tobago.

The event provided a platform for young people to develop effective and innovative youth led drug prevention action plans for implementation in communities. Subsequent to the training, the youths were tasked with developing a project for implementation in a specific community.

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS

In 2023, two of the main international agencies with which the NDC collaborated included; the Cooperation Programme between Latin America, Caribbean and the European Union on Drugs and Policies (COPOLAD) and the Organization of American States, Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (OAS/CICAD).

Building on the progress made in the previous stages, COPOLAD III continued to promote technical cooperation as well as political dialogue between Latin America, the Caribbean and the EU, to support the region in the implementation of more effective drug policies and with results that substantially improve the lives of people and, especially, of the most vulnerable. In addition, CICAD is the Western Hemisphere's primary policy forum for addressing the drug problem. It promotes dialogue between member states, as well as multilateral cooperation, and executes action programs to strengthen the countries' ability to prevent and treat drug abuse.

Stakeholder representatives, in addition to the staff of the NDC Secretariat, joined regional and hemispheric colleagues at a number of, meetings, workshops, trainings and webinars in 2023. The topics covered at these sessions were a combination of the thematic areas in the Operational Plan 2021- 2025, all of which are highlighted in the following section.

CICAD'S AREAS OF COLLABORATION

EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

Training Seminars

GENDER EQUALITY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES (GENLEA)

Regional Training Course on the Control of Illicit Trafficking for Female Officers

NATIONAL DRUG POLICY AND STRATEGIES

Universal Curriculum Training for National Drug Strategies; Exchange of Good Practices: National Drug Policies, Strategies and Plan.

NATIONAL DRUG OBSERVATORY

Workshop on National Drug Observatories

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The 8th Expert Group Meeting on Alternative Development (EGM on AD)

GENDER IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Meeting on Gender in the Criminal Justice System

GROUP OF EXPERTS ON MARITIME NARCO-TRAFFICKING

CICAD Expert Group Meeting

CARIBBEAN YOUTH FORUM ON DRUG USE PREVENTION

CICAD 74TH REGULAR SESSION

COPOLAD III AREA OF COLLABORATION

ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION

Technical consultation on “Treatment and Care for People with Drug Use Disorders in Contact with the Criminal Justice System: Alternatives to Conviction or Punishment”

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

- A webinar series on “Alternative Development and the Environment”
- Webinar on Innovative Alternative Development Approaches
- Web-based training “Addressing gender in Alternative Development projects”

PUBLIC POLICY

- Working Group on “Vulnerabilities, Territory and Drugs, Networks of Innovation in Public Policies”
- Regional Workshop on plans for access to quality care services and social inclusion for people with problem drug use in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Workshop on ‘The importance of alternative sentencing for minor drug offences as a key element for progress towards the humanisation of criminal and penitentiary policy’

PRECURSOR CHEMICALS)

Workshop entitled “The Exchange of Information and Intelligence and Improvement of Chemical Management and Disposal Systems”

NATIONAL DRUG OBSERVATORY

Workshop on National Drug Observatories

DEMAND REDUCTION

Strengthening Social Resilience and reducing Drug Demand Through Art and Cultural Workshops for Trinidad and Tobago’s Migrant Population

BUDGET

The National Drug Council was allocated \$150,000 for the fiscal 2022/2023.

WAY FORWARD 2024

The NDC, supported by the Secretariat will explore the following key activities for 2024:

- Continued Monitoring and Evaluation of the National Drug Policy Operational Plan 2021 to 2025;
- Continued coordination of Trinidad and Tobago's response to the 8th Round of the MEM;
- Implementation of the Rapid Situational Assessment on Drug Use in Trinidad and Tobago;
- Finalizing the Gender Equality Assessment in Counterdrug Law Enforcement Agencies in Trinidad and Tobago;
- Implementation of the "Liming with a Purpose" initiative in recognition of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking;
- Ongoing Development of the DIN-TT; and
- Continued Collaboration with our International and Regional Partners.
- Collaboration with CICAD on a Study on Synthetic Drugs in Trinidad and Tobago
- Programme on Gender in the Criminal Justice System

CONCLUSION

This Annual Report illuminates the steadfast dedication of the Council in its continued efforts to monitor the implementation of the National Drug Policy and Operational Plan. Though challenges exist, as we chart the course ahead, the National Drug Council of Trinidad and Tobago will continue to engage its stakeholders and advocate for appropriate policies and legislation driven by research. We express gratitude to all of our stakeholders for their unwavering support and collaboration.

Mandate of the National Drug Council of Trinidad and Tobago

- Monitor and evaluate the progress made during the implementation of the National Anti-Drug Plan, relative to both demand and supply reduction and make appropriate recommendations.
- Advise Government on all related sectorial plans and budgets for implementation of the projects, programmes and interventions in the Plan.
- Serve as the point of contact between Demand and Supply Reduction sectors locally, regionally and in the hemisphere.
- Maintain a performance matrix of the implementation of all Plans of Action to which Trinidad and Tobago is obligated under various international initiatives and advise Government accordingly.
- Serve as the National Co-coordinating Entity (NCE) for the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) process as required by CICAD (this committee might also be regarded as the nucleus of the National Commission).
- To perform all other activities relevant to the formulation, development, co-ordination and monitoring of national strategies and plans against illegal narcotics supply and demand.

Membership of the National Drug Council as at December 2023

- Mrs. Jennifer Boucaud-Blake : Chair
- Ms. Erla Harewood- Christopher: Commissioner of Police
- Mrs. Gillian Gellizeau-Menzies : Executive Director, National Security Council Secretariat
- Major (Ret'd) Roger Best : Director, SSA
- Mr. Roger Gaspard : Director of Public Prosecutions
- Mr. Nigel Stoddard : Director (Ag.), Financial Intelligence Unit (FIUTT)
- Ms. Yasmin Harris : Comptroller of Customs and Excise
- Mr. Garvin Pettier : Director, Multilateral Relations, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs
- Ms. Lisa Ifill: Representative of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services- Director (Ag.), Social Planning and Research
- Mr. Bobby Andrews : Representative of the THA-Coordinator, Planning, and Development, Tobago House of Assembly
- Ms. Lyra Thompson-Hollingsworth : Coordinator, NADAPP
- Mr. Phillip Ryan : President, National Council on Alcohol & Other Addictions
- Ms. Neela Birjah; CEO, Rebirth House
- Mr. John Aboud : Representative, Chamber of Industry & Commerce

Stakeholders Agencies of the Drug Information Network of Trinidad and Tobago (DIN-TT)

1. Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago
2. Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs:
 - Central Authority
 - Anti-Money Laundering/ Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Compliance Unit
3. Ministry of Health:
 - Health, Policy, Research and Planning Unit
 - National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (NADAPP)
4. Ministry of Finance:
 - Financial Intelligence Unit
 - Customs and Excise Division
5. Ministry of National Security:
 - Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Unit
 - Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre
 - Research Unit
 - Strategic Services Agency (SSA)
 - Immigration Division
 - Trans National Organised Crime Unit (TOCU)
6. Treatment Centres:
 - Helping Every Addict Live (H.E.A.L.)
 - New Life Ministries Rehabilitation Centre
 - Rebirth House
 - Serenity Place
 - Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Centre, Caura

7. Tobago House of Assembly:

- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme (ADAPP)

8. Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force:

- Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard
- Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard
- Trinidad and Tobago Regiment

9. Trinidad and Tobago Police Service:

- Crime and Problem Analysis Branch (CAPA)
- Special Investigations Unit (SIU)
- Traffic and Highway Patrol Branch
- Court and Process Branch

10. Trinidad and Tobago Prisons Service

11. Youth Training Rehabilitation Centre (YTrC)

12. Universities:

- University of the West Indies (Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies)
- University of the Southern Caribbean

Members of the National Planning Committee for the Implementation of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking 2023

- Representative, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme, Tobago House of Assembly.
- Representative, Ministry of National Security, Communications Unit.
- Representative, Ministry of Youth Development and National Services.
- Representative, National Alcohol & Drug Abuse Prevention Programme Trinidad and Tobago.
- Representative, Police Audio Visual Unit.
- Representative, Rebirth House.
- Representative, Trinidad and Tobago Prisons Service.

Members of the Steering Committee for the National Drug Operational Plan 2021 to 2025 as at December 2023

- Mrs. Cheryl St. Louis- Felix : Manager, NDC /Chair
- Mr. Garvin Pettier : Director, Multilateral Relations, Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs
- Mr. Wendell Lucas : Director, TTPS FIB
- Ms. Jezelle Charles : Scientific Officer II, Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Center
- Mr. Vernly Gift : Special Investigations Unit
- Mr. Bobby Andrews : Representative of the THA-Coordinator, Planning and Development, Tobago House of Assembly
- Ms. Lyra Thompson-Hollingsworth : Coordinator, NADAPP
- Mr. Phillip Ryan : President, National Council on Alcohol & Other Addictions
- Mrs. Sarah Look Loy : Research Specialist, NDC

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