



JOINT MEDIA ADVISORY

Joint webinar to share good practices and information from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean on treatment as an alternative to conviction or punishment for offenders with drug use disorders during COVID-19

WHAT: Joint webinar to share good practices and information from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean on treatment as an alternative to conviction or punishment for offenders with drug use disorders during COVID-19.

Speakers will include:

1. **Ms Cisse Mariama Mohamed**, Director of Social Affairs, African Union Commission
2. **Ambassador Adam Namm**, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)/OAS (Organization of American States)
3. **Ms. Miwa Kato**, Director, Division for Operations, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
4. **Ms. Florence Macharia**, Senior Principal Magistrate, Head of Station, Shanzu Law Courts, Kenya
5. **Dr Pelmos Mashabela**, Deputy Chairperson, Central Drug Authority, South Africa
6. **The Honorable Justice Malcolm Holdip**, High Court Judge at the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago
7. **Magistrate Gerardo Rubén Alfaro** of the Criminal Cassation Chamber and Rector of Restorative Justice in the Judicial Power of Costa Rica

WHEN: Thursday, 17 September 2020

TIME: 16:00-18:00 East African Time (EAT) / 15:00-17:00 (CET) and 09:00 -11:00 (EST)

WHERE: Zoom Link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VMeWGnCTShyTXxCJKvXDow

WHO: The African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (ES-CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS) are organizing a joint webinar to share good practices and information on treatment as an alternative to conviction or punishment for offenders with drug use disorders during COVID-19. This webinar targets substantive experts and policy makers working in the field of Justice and Health from both regions. English will be the working language of the Meeting. Interpretation in Arabic, French, Portuguese and Spanish will be available.

Expected Outcome:

The main expected outcome is to share knowledge, experiences of treatment and care being used as an alternative for conviction or punishment for people with drug use disorders who are in contact with the criminal justice system during COVID-19 in both regions, Africa and the Americas.

Target Audience:

1. Substantive Experts on Justice and Health contributing in their individual capacity from Africa and the Americas.
2. African Union/CICAD/UNODC substantive sections and staff.

Registration:

Delegates and journalists are invited to join the event on **Thursday 17 September 2020, from 16:00 to 18:00 (EAT) / 15:00-17:00 (CET) and 09:00 -11:00 (EST)**. The webinar will feature presentations on the experience of countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean on the implementation of Alternatives to incarceration for drug users in conflict with the law under the COVID-19 pandemic. Please use the **following zoom link for registration**:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VMeWGnCTShyTXxCJKvXDow .

Once you register, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar on September 17.

Note to Editors:

The Treatment and Care of People with Drug Use Disorders in Contact with the Criminal Justice System initiative was launched by the UNODC and the World Health Organization (WHO) at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in 2016. This initiative aims to support Member States in their efforts to pursue alternative measures to conviction or punishment for appropriate drug-related offences of a minor nature.

The African Union's fifth strategic framework to guide drug policy development on the continent (AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention-2019-2023) promotes a multi-sectorial, balanced and integrated approach to drug control with the fundamental goal to improve the health, security and socio-economic well-being of the people of Africa by addressing drug trafficking and problematic drug use in all its forms and manifestations and preventing the onset of drug use. One of the pillars of the continental drug action plan encourages Member States to implement alternatives to punishment for drug use, promote proportionality in sentencing for drug offenses and provide services for People with Drug Use Disorders in Contact with the Criminal Justice System. The African Union has thus been working with its Member States to provide access to evidence-based treatment as alternative to punishment. It has also been galvanising Member States to sensitize prosecutorial and judicial authority personnel regarding alternatives to conviction/punishment, court diversion and provision of services for people who use drugs in conflict with the law.

Since 2008, ES-CICAD has worked with OAS member states on exploring, designing, implementing, and/or evaluating alternatives to incarceration, consistent with the 2010 CICAD Hemispheric Drug Strategy, which recommends addressing substance use disorders as a chronic, relapsing disease that should form a core element of public health policy. ES-CICAD has accordingly been working to promote problem-solving courts and similar judicially-supervised treatment alternatives to incarceration and social inclusion in the Americas, based on evidence-based practices.

For further information about the Joint Webinar, please contact:

Africa Union Commission:

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UNODC

Ms. Giovanna Campello, Chief Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section

OAS/CICAD

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