

THE NATIONAL ANTI-DRUG SECRETARIAT



1st Quarter Report
2015

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



I am pleased to submit this 1st Quarter Report for 2015 of the National Anti-Drug Secretariat (NADS). Drugs is a key root cause of crime in The Bahamas. Where there are drugs, there are guns. Where there are guns, there are murders. Hence, any effort to better control the illegal drug trade is a move to reduce violent crime.

During the period under review, NADS has completed and embarked on a number of critical work activities to promote and coordinate local anti-drug efforts.

Our stakeholders have been re-focused and updated on their mandates within the Government's **National Anti-Drug Strategy 2012-2016**, and have pledged their renewed support to do their part in the fight against drugs.

While major drug seizures and arrests continue on the supply aspect, hemispheric partners have stressed the importance of a new spotlight on demand reduction. Therefore, a significant amount of NADS actions have centered on educating youths on the direct and indirect consequences of drug use and abuse with a view to discouraging youths from using drugs.

Many thanks.

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STAKEHOLDER VISITS

During the period under review, NADS conducted visits at the following stakeholder agencies:

Government

1. Port Department
2. Adolescent Health
3. Department of Education
4. Sandilands Rehabilitation Center
5. Bahamas National Drug Agency
6. Bahamas Information Services

NGO's

1. Rosetta House
2. BASH
3. Teen Challenge
4. Nassau Container Port



During the visits, the NADS Director met with the heads of these agencies and shared the renewed focus of NADS in the anti-drug fight. The Director also provided them with a copy of The Bahamas' "**National Anti-Drug Strategy 2012-2016**" and reminded them of their role and responsibilities as outlined in the plan. They were also admonished to maintain accurate reports each year and submit them to NADS as such reports will be highlighted in the NADS annual report.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

During the 1st Quarter, NADS embarked on a number of research projects as follows:

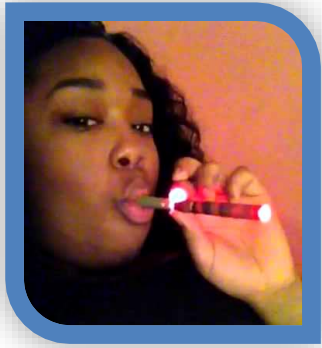
Beedies - a research report on "Beedies" was completed during the first quarter of 2015. Among its key findings was the fact that these filter-less cigarettes were more lethal than regular cigarettes. It was also discovered that the local beedie market has gone 'underground' as local importers have sought to avoid paying the new high cost of duty as outlined in the recently passed Customs Excise Tax Act.

Recommendations from this study included:

1. The Ministry of Health urgently examine the health risks associated with the smoking of beedies and determine whether such risks are severe enough to support banning the product in The Bahamas as in other progressive jurisdictions.
2. Joint intelligence-led operations involving the Customs Department and the Royal Bahamas Police Force should be executed to disrupt and prosecute persons operating the underground beedie market.
3. A public awareness campaign should immediately be launched to educate members of the public, particularly adolescent youths, on the lethal effects of smoking beedies specifically and smoking generally.

The 'Hookah' Pen – researchers at NADS have embarked on a study on this new product. Known as the 'e-cigarette', this device is being introduced as a healthy alternative for cigarette smoking. People are being told that smoking a hookah is safer and will not cause you any harm. Moreover, it is also seen as a recreational activity, which is why some local bars have bought the product and provided customers with a venue to smoke a hookah.



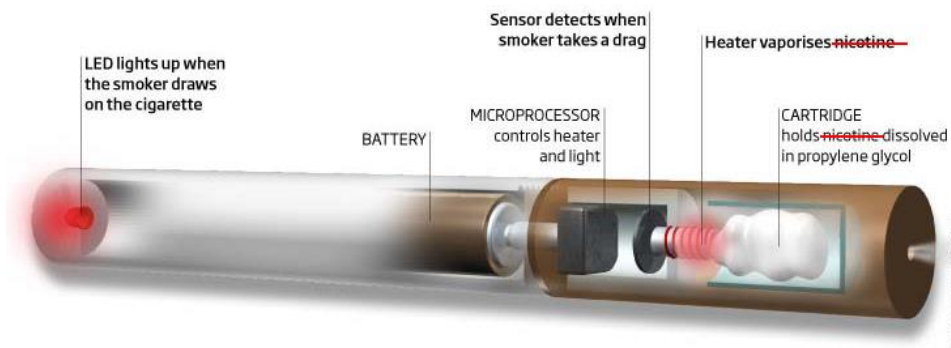


A youth smoking a hookah pen.

However, ongoing scientific research has indicated that hookah smoking may not be as safe as some declare. Researchers have found that smoking from a hookah has harmful effects on the health of a human being much like smoking a cigarette and in some ways it is even more dangerous than cigarette smoking. The NADS study should be completed by the end of the 2nd Quarter of 2015. Below is a visual on how the pen works.

Smoke without fire

Suck on an e-cigarette and it produces a cloud of ~~nicotine~~ carrying vapour with none of the toxic by-products of burning tobacco



"Preventing Murders in The Bahamas" - this critical work is being carried out to design a Murder Prevention Strategy for The Bahamas. As a follow-up to the previous study entitled **"Reducing Murders in The Bahamas – A Strategic Plan Based on Empirical Research"**.

The strategy will be guided by research emanating from an examination of local murders over the last 5 years. This study should be completed by the 3rd quarter of 2015.

Fear of Crime Among Tourists – this research is being carried out to measure the level of fear among tourist as it relates to crime in The Bahamas. While there has been much rhetoric on the subject, there has not been any empirical evidence presented. NADS researchers are collecting data from the Ministry of Tourism’s exit surveys to determine what views our nation’s visitors have on the subject upon leaving The Bahamas. This study should be complete by the 3rd quarter of 2015.

SUPPLY REDUCTION ACTIVITIES

On Monday, March 23, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Lisa Johnson, accompanied by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement’s Deputy Director for Western Hemisphere Programs Susan Snyder and other senior U.S. Government officials, participated in a formal handover ceremony of a state-of-the-art, fully-equipped 41’ Apostle Interceptor police vessel to the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF) at the Marine Support Services Branch on Bay Street. The vessel was acquired through a joint effort between the U.S. Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) U.S. Embassy, Bahamas and the Bahamian Government.





The SAFE Apostle series provides unmatched performance in high speed interceptor vessels. It is an offshore racing-inspired, high-speed interceptor vessel featuring SAFE's patent-pending Forced Air Stepped Technology or "F.A.S.T." which enhances speed, performance, and fuel economy. The unique hull design produces incredible handling characteristics and exceptional cornering performance. The Royal Bahamas' Apostle features thermal imaging, four 300HP Mercury Verado outboard engines, weapons mounting capability, autopilot, shock mitigating seats, GPS navigation, XDR-1 extreme duty reinforced collar system and is capable of speeds in excess of 54 knots (62 MPH) at full mission loads. The Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) at the U.S. Embassy, Bahamas administers and supports counternarcotics affairs in conjunction with the Bahamian Government through the US Foreign Assistance Act.

DEMAND REDUCTION ACTIVITIES

Establishment of a Drug Treatment Court for The Bahamas - The hemispheric Drug Strategy (approved by the OAS General Assembly in June 2010) states that drug dependency is a chronic, relapsing disease that must be dealt with as a core element of public health policy. The Strategy calls on member states to "explore the means of offering treatment, rehabilitation and recovery support services to drug dependent offenders as an



alternative to criminal prosecution or imprisonment”. Drug Treatment Courts (DTC) have been established in a number of member states as an alternative to incarceration.

On May 7, 2013, the Cabinet authorized the establishment of a pilot DTC in The Bahamas. During the 1st Quarter of 2015, NADS has held a number of meetings with officials from the RBPF, AG’s Office, and the Ministry of Health determine eligibility requirements, rules and procedures on the DTC for The Bahamas. The Attorney General has indicated that she wants the DTC court to be opened by September of 2015. A new Drug Treatment Court Act along with Regulations is currently being drafted for review and will be completed by the 2nd Quarter of 2015.

Minimum Standards of Treatment Facilities – NADS is monitoring the progress of this initiative supported by the OAS, which seeks to put hemispheric standards of care for drug treatment providers. Officials at the Sandilands Rehabilitation Center have been working on this project and NADS expects to receive a status report from them by the 2nd Quarter of 2015.

International Day Against Drug Abuse & Illicit Trafficking – this annual event commemorates the global day set (June 26) aside to observe the ongoing fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. NADS has organized a series of events leading up to the day including a church service, march, exhibition and ribbon day. All stakeholders are a part of the planning committee and this year’s festivities will be exciting.

Establishment of a “National Drug Free Schools Day” – while there is a global day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking, The Bahamas has no national day. Moreover, schools are closed on June 26. As a result, NADS is developing the establishment of a ‘National Drug Free Schools Day’ for The Bahamas. NADS staffers have already secured support from the Department of Education who has expressed their excitement for such an endeavor. A Cabinet Paper will be drafted for our Ministry’s review in the 2nd Quarter of 2015.



The Bahamas National Drug Council Anniversary - Celebrating 29 years of existence, the Bahamas National Drug Council (BNDC) hosted a series of events during the month of March. One of these events was a mini-exhibition on March 18, 2015 at the Royal Victoria Gardens, where its theme “*Make Health Your ‘New High’ In Life, Not Drugs*” was promoted by Administrator Dr. Bridgette Rolle. Students were given specifics of the fight on drugs carried out by the Royal Bahamas Defense Force and The Royal Bahamas Police Force Drug Enforcement Unit.



National Drugs Observatory (NDO) – this critical arm of NADS is being revamped with new equipment and qualified staffers. It is expected that by the end of the 2nd Quarter of 2015, the NDO will be fully functional.

NADS OFFICIAL WEBSITE - we are currently talks with a private designer who is able design and professional NADS website and also offer training to NADS staffers in website maintenance. We look forward to engaging this designer in the new fiscal year.

CICAD Activities

The Fifty-Sixth Regular Session of CICAD was held from November 19 to 21, 2014 in Guatemala City, Guatemala. The Sessions took place in the Quetzal meeting room of the Hotel Vista Real, located at Km 9 road to El Salvador, Guatemala City. Representing The Bahamas was Dr. Chaswell Hanna, Director of NADS and Mr. David Ramsey, Supply Reduction Officer. The sessions were geared mostly toward demand reduction and developing new alternatives to incarceration for chronic drug users. Dr. Hanna also had private talks with the Executive Secretary of CICAD Mr. Paul Simons (pictured below).



The 57th Regular Session of CICAD will be held in Washington DC between April 29 –May 1, 2015. A key aspect of this Session will be the drafting of the Hemispheric Drug Strategy. Dr. Hanna will be representing The Bahamas on the Working Group to draft the Plan of Action 2016-2020 of the Hemispheric Drug Strategy. During the 57th Session, Dr. Hanna will also be gathering information on details supporting The Bahamas offering itself for the candidacy of CICAD and hosting a Regular Session in November of 2016.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

On Friday, February 13, 2015, the male staffers of NADS treated all of the females at the Ministry of National Security to cupcakes.

