

illicit drug crops.

4. Education and health: Many promising programs are under way to educate youth and other high-risk groups on the alternatives to drug abuse, and to treat those who do end up abusing those substances. Foreign Ministers might discuss how we can enhance international co-operation in this area, and promote research on the effectiveness of demand-reduction programs in different national settings.
5. Public engagement: Recent international agreements, including the Santiago Plan of Action and several documents adopted at the UN General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem, call for greater collaboration with civil society organizations working on drugs and broader human security issues. We believe that Foreign Ministers could do more to encourage public initiatives, and to involve sectors of the public in a dialogue on policy options in this area.

These are not the only drug-related issues of concern in the hemisphere. Yet they are matters on which we believe Foreign Ministers could make a significant contribution. They would help to ensure coherence among existing efforts, to reinforce promising initiatives that deserve more support, and especially to foster innovation in engaging our citizens in the search for solutions.

Each of these issues is complex. Their discussion requires careful preparation and consultation with a range of stakeholders. With this in mind, we have asked a consortium of independent research centres to organize a conference in early spring, to generate more ideas for the Foreign Ministers Dialogue in June. We look forward to the active participation of Mexican experts at that conference. And we are confident that Canada and Mexico can work together to make the Dialogue a productive contribution to the construction of human security in the hemisphere.

Conclusion

Our changing world has redefined traditional notions of security. Increasingly, the security challenges we face and our impetus for action — global, regional or local — are based on the security of the individual. I have outlined how Canada is responding, and have highlighted the hemispheric dimension of our efforts, especially the challenges posed by illicit drugs.

Over the next few years, Canada will host a series of hemispheric events ending with the next Hemispheric Summit. We are committed to strengthening links with the hemisphere, and in so doing to advance human security in the region. Canada and Mexico have established a sound partnership, which will allow us, together, to play a leadership role in promoting this objective.

I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

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