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cicad

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REMARKS BY SECRETARY GENERAL

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JOSE MIGUEL INSULZA
38th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug
Abuse Control Commission
Washington, D.C., December 6, 2005**

Major General José Aníbal Sanz, Secretary of State, Chairman of the National Drug Council, Dominican Republic, and Chairman of CICAD

Lic. Javier Viscarra, Vice-Minister of Social Defense, Bolivia, and Vice Chair of CICAD

Distinguished representatives, Permanent Observers, delegates of other international and regional organizations, and special guests:

Thank you for joining me today and collaborating on such an important issue as the one that we are dealing with this morning.

I want to start mentioning that the Americas probably has the world's best regional drug information system as it impacts government policy, which is reinforced by the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism. CICAD has earned an excellent reputation, not only because of the quality of the staff but also due to the commitment of the member states to making it work, especially in enabling the constructive dialogue that has prevailed in the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism and other capacity building programs that have become examples to others here in the OAS and elsewhere.

During the IV Summit of the Americas that recently took place in Mar del Plata, Argentina, there were three points regarding the fight against the production, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs and psychotropic substances that were specifically mentioned in the Plan of Action that was agreed upon by all member countries.

In the first of these, CICAD is charged to continue expanding the study to estimate the human, social and economic costs of the drug trade. This is a renewal of a 2001 mandate towards which CICAD has made substantial progress, having created a statistical methodology and carried out pilot studies in six countries. The program will be expanded next year to at least two additional member states. This activity is at the core of what the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID) has been working towards since its founding in 2000, and now counterpart national observatories are following suit.

Second, CICAD asked that a new mandate be included to develop, implement and evaluate school-based programs for substance abuse prevention, such as Life Skills Education. The Summit delegates endorsed this additional mandate, as they also

supported greater work in the area of prevention. CICAD declared 2005 the Year of Substance Abuse Prevention, and is building on strong progress to date, as demonstrated, for example, by the new agreement with the Chilean National Drug Council, CONACE.

Last but not least, the Summit recognized the need to promote support for integral, sustainable development in those countries where illicit crops are grown. As you are well aware, CICAD has extremely limited funding for alternative development, although we are finding formulas for new partnerships, such as a joint endeavor with the World Cocoa Foundation and private business. We will continue to support alternative development as best we can within our financial means.

The OAS is undergoing difficult times due to budget cuts and limited funding. As well, new needs will arise in order to best realign the organization and its programs with a set of viable, sustainable priorities for the future. These changes are going to require a new mindset among the OAS staff, the member states themselves and other stakeholders in the inter-American process.

Nonetheless, these circumstances do not indicate that we should discard everything the OAS has worked on in the past. Indeed, our best prospects can be found in the underlying principles and practices of the same institution. Horizontal cooperation is one of those practices. It is based on the premise that information, knowledge, expertise and advisory services can be transferred between and among the member states themselves, not only from the OAS to the member states, so that governments can minimize their start-up costs in new areas of specialization.

The OAS has traditionally positioned itself as an orchestrator of horizontal cooperation programs. Under the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, several member states have set up formal funds for horizontal cooperation: Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay and Peru, for instance. Horizontal cooperation has been a cornerstone of the past two Five-Year Strategic Plans of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, and I can guarantee you that it will serve as a foundation for the next one that is being drafted as we speak.

CICAD's initiatives to supplement its activities with horizontal cooperation have been grounded in the real needs of the member states, backed up by political commitment and administered with effectiveness. Today, I would like to single out CICAD's most recent ventures in innovative approaches to program management.

I am especially pleased that my country, Chile, and specifically CONACE, has distinguished itself through its leadership in seeking out opportunities for horizontal cooperation within CICAD. Last month, CONACE and CICAD signed an agreement for undertaking greater responsibilities in training activities on demand reduction, especially school-based prevention, as well as to provide follow-up monitoring and evaluation of prevention programs. CONACE will help neighboring member states prepare their teams, thus saving CICAD in airfare costs and related expenses of sending staff to the Southern Cone. This program focus has received the highest mandate from the latest Summit of the Americas.

CICAD and the National Antidrug Secretariat of Brazil (SENAD) are also close to signing an agreement to consolidate Brazil's role as a development axis for drug-related research and scientific inquiry. This initiative will mean that the University of Sao Paulo's School of Nursing at Riberão Preto will take primary responsibility for equipping and operating the online graduate program on research methodology applied to drug abuse studies. Brazil also will be taking the lead in a multi-site study on drugs, women and violence in the Americas in 24 universities, as well as other research efforts.

Hopefully, all countries will contribute to ensuring this agency's future and the fight against drugs. All member states must view themselves as full and equal partners, not as beneficiaries in assistance programs. Part of CICAD's past success has been because member states have contributed in-kind and staff time to enabling CICAD meetings and training activities. Now we must go beyond that modest level.

An investment in regional capacity is going to benefit each individual member state because CICAD has the means to translate that capacity into benefits and ensure access to them. We need to stop thinking in terms of a zero-sum game in which the gains for one participant must result in loss for others. Each member state must not just contribute to projects in its own jurisdiction, but must also contribute towards the greater regional system of collaboration and mutual assistance.

I wish to leave you with a challenge that I know that you and your governments are well-qualified to accept, because you have already proven it over the past two decades. I ask that you take this initiative of horizontal cooperation, of peer ownership of programs, and of financial buy-in for program activities, and lead by example. Over the next few years, the 34 member states will be debating the thrust and scope of the Organization of American States, shaping and defining its very future and guaranteeing its financial viability. When our discussion get lost in wordy abstractions and short-term bickering, allow me to point to CICAD as a concrete, living example of what the whole organization should and can become.

When asked to show why seed money should be invested in pilot projects, allow me to point to the Life Skills program with the Lions Clubs International Foundation. This initiative is being incorporated into participating countries' educational curriculum, and duplicated in school rooms across the hemisphere so that kids don't learn only how to say no to drugs, but also how to say yes to the challenges of learning and life.

When asked to demonstrate imaginative, resourceful uses of horizontal cooperation, we turn to the examples of Chile and Brazil and how they have been followed by other countries taking the lead in more training programs in demand reduction, in treatment of prison inmates, in financial investigative techniques, in ground breaking research on the economic costs of the drug problem and in other areas of specialization.

When asked to show how governments should buy into the OAS as a top-priority, ongoing investment in the future, allow me to point to CICAD and show how each CICAD member state, no matter how small or pressed for public funds, is making contributions in cash and in kind to program activities, above and beyond the member states' contributions through the quota system.

I know that I can count on you and your governments to give palpable proof that the OAS, its agencies and partnerships are irreplaceable instruments to bring development, peace and well-being to our hemisphere.

Thank you.