SPEECH OF GENERAL PAULO ROBERTO YOG DE MIRANDA UCHÔA
CHAIRMAN OF THE
INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL
COMMISSION (CICAD)
On behalf of the Brazilian Government, I am honored to assume the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission’s presidency – such an important agency of the Organization of the American States (OAS).

The election that we just held ends the process that was initiated in April of 2005, during the Thirty-seventh Regular Session of CICAD, that began in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. At that time Brazil asked for the support of other countries of the hemisphere for the Vice-President candidacy. The support for our request in that meeting was overwhelming.

Back in 2005 we told this assembly that Brazil already had a solid institution that dealt with the Reduction of Drug Demand and Supply. Furthermore, we also said that Brazil had strong political commitments regarding the combat of narcotrafficking and all their related activities. Since the theme is considered a domestic priority in Brazil, these commitments have been reinstated in the official speeches of our government. For all of the above reasons, we felt that it was time for Brazil to exert a more active role in this arena, a role that would be more suitable to our current efforts. This was the context in which the idea of presiding over CICAD came to mind for the first time.

Today I am very pleased to address all the delegates here present and to acknowledge the faith and trust you have placed in my country to execute this very important job.

We accept this commitment fully aware of what it involves. You can be assured that we shall concentrate our efforts towards strengthening the bonds of integration and cooperation within the inter-American scene. These bonds have been established to protect our people against the harmful effects of unlawful drug use and drug abuse, as well as to fight against narcotrafficking in the inter-American community.

We believe that the Fortieth Regular Session of CICAD is convened during a very special time. At this moment we are facing several challenges as well as new opportunities are being set forth to the inter-American community in general, and particularly to the hemispheric anti-drug agenda.

In summary, we assume the presidency in a moment in which CICAD has much to commemorate regarding its past accomplishments. Nevertheless, we are fully aware of CICAD needs to develop from now on.

Yesterday, during the inaugural session, and during CICAD's 20th Anniversary Dedication, we paid tribute to our accomplishments. It would be difficult for me to pay a higher tribute to the great work done over the past two decades.

We can hardly believe that Brazil is the 20th country to occupy this seat. During these past years, we have brought diverse countries together, each with an unique social, economical, cultural and political history. Together we have built our own history filled with
positive accomplishments. This history is also marked by responsibility toward our associated members, by the capacity to seize the moment, and to also foresee the potential scenarios for the future.

We will assume a Presidency filled with the experiences of those who preceded us and were supported by a group of sovereign States drawn together by the political responsibilities thrust upon them by the drug issue.

With all that in mind we would now like to invite you to participate in a moment of joint reflection.

After yesterday's tribute to CICAD, we realized that the hemispheric Anti-Drug Strategy has reached its 10th Birthday. Notwithstanding, regional and hemispheric issues are now being increasingly influenced by broader global trends.

Our joint reflection must take note that within the United Nations forum, the members of this Commission are contributing to the development of new phases in the drug phenomenon analysis. For instance, we fully endorsed the "Special Session of the General Assembly Declaration", of June of 1998.

I recall, with both realism and faith, the thinking of the classic writer and philosopher, John Schaar, when he wrote that "The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the acts of creating them, changes both creator and the destination".

Will we, the representatives of this new era, be up to the challenge?

The answer is assuredly positive if we have the courage to look undaunted into the unknown, and, without prejudice search, together, for real alternatives to diminish drug consumption and intensify our efforts to combat drug trafficking in the hemisphere. Our actions will be effective and ubiquitous if we know how to transform the solitary effort into an effort of solidarity.

With this spirit of solidarity I request that all delegates give their utmost attention to the importance of the theme that will be presented by CICAD’s Executive Secretary tomorrow, during the Third Plenary session. Their presentation will be about the "Ten Years of the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere and the implementation of its Action Plan: Discussion on its revision".

As I have already stated, we are entering a new era, we are maturing our country's interactions, strengthening our mutual respect, and solidifying the cooperation bonds that unites us.

We are challenged daily by the appearance of new drugs, by new consumption patterns, and most importantly, by the boldness of transnational criminal organizations that are dedicated to drug trafficking.

Hence, due to all this dynamic change in the threat, it is time to think of the future in the same manner we have been doing for the past ten years.

The world's trends will certainly affect us all, but the strengthening of CICAD, of this Commission that has accomplished so much in the right direction, will mostly depends on us. It will depend on our capacity to work in partnership and in solidarity. The various
Cooperation Agreements which are already in place, and that were conceived based on each countries reality will certainly contribute to the success of our task.

At this time, I would like to congratulate the Colombian Delegation, our neighboring country, which was just elected for CICAD’s Vice Presidency. I am confident that our work together will be of great value to this Commission.

I have the honor of receiving this position from my dear friend Ambassador Mauricio Dorfler Ocampo. I highly compliment him in for his great work, and thank him for his valuable legacy and for his friendship.

As the President, it is my obligation to set an example and only give you a short speech, but not before thanking you for the confidence you entrusted my country with. I am confident that the joint effort we have made in the past, and will continue to make, will make a difference in the quality of life for our people.

May God shine on the new path that we are now embarking upon in this gracious and beautiful city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

Thank you very much!