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INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE

CONTROL COMMISSION

CICAD

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

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REMARKS BY
CHAIR OF CICAD
MR. CHANDRIKAPERSAD SANTOKHI

**Speech of the Honorable Chandrikapersad Santokhi, Chair of CICAD on the occasion of the
Opening of the 49th Regular CICAD session
on the 4th of May 2011 in Paramaribo, Suriname**

[Vice-President of the Republic of Suriname, Mr. Robert Ameerali,

Speaker of the National Assembly, Mrs. Jenny Simons

Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, Mr. Albert Ramdin,

Members of the Council of Ministers,

Members of the National Assembly,

Ambassadors and representatives of the Corps Diplomatique,

Acting President of the High Court of Justice of Suriname,

Acting Prosecutor General with the High Court of Justice of Suriname,

Members of the Head Table,

Dignitaries,

Fellow Commissioners

Delegates

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Guests]

May I, as Chair of CICAD, welcome you at the 49th Regular Session of CICAD in Suriname, in Paramaribo, and I wish to welcome in particular, all our friends, delegation members, the leadership and staff of the OAS and CICAD Secretariat, as well as all other guests.

Once again welcome [bienvenida, soyez le bienvenu, bem-vindo, welkom].

We should be pleased that we are here today in Suriname as CICAD family, all the way from North America, Central America, the Caribbean and South America, but also our friends from Europe, and from other international and regional organizations. We should be pleased because it was not an easy process for many who are here today, but also for Suriname as a host, to get you here to attend CICAD 49. I understand that some delegates are still traveling and will join us shortly. Your presence, however, testifies once again the paramount importance of keeping our principle of "shared responsibility" high, even if sometimes difficult challenges are involved, and you have given expression to this principle by your presence here in Suriname, which I sincerely appreciate.

The 49th CICAD session can be qualified as a special meeting for different reasons:

First of all, because it is held in Suriname; and also because it is the first CICAD session that is held in Suriname.

Secondly, because this is the session in which the Plan of Action for the Hemispheric Drug Strategy will be considered and approved, and thirdly because one of the themes of this CICAD meeting is also the commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of CICAD this year, and finally, this CICAD meeting also marks the 50th anniversary of the first Drug Convention of the UN, the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs adopted in 1961.

Two important moments, which we should not let us pass by like that. On the one hand this is a moment to congratulate each other, but it is also a moment that should be accompanied by several important issues, that we also need to consider as CICAD during these, but also at the upcoming meetings of CICAD, more in particular:

Where are we presently as specialized body of the OAS charged with the drug problem of the Western Hemisphere?

We see that CICAD no longer operates as the sole entity in the field of anti-drug coordination; so how do we deal with this? How do we deal with other regional and sub regional organizations that are involved in drug control issues? How is the cooperation and coordination? What kind of policies have been developed to promote synergy between all organizations and institutions that are involved in drug programs in the Western Hemisphere?

How is the internal CICAD organization itself doing? Should we not have a closer look at CICAD as specialized organization of the OAS, and its tasks, responsibilities as well as its Statute and Regulations? Are these not also subject to change after 25 years of its existence?

How is the cooperation in the field of extra-regional cooperation and the role of CICAD in this? Drug control cooperation between the Western Hemisphere with other regions, such as Africa, Europe, Asia, etc.

In my opinion it is time within the context of its 25th anniversary to look at how we can make the organization stronger and more decisive. But it is also time to look at what the status is of the drug problem and the drug policy globally 50 years after the first drug convention of the UN.

What were the objectives then and were these objectives achieved? What was the global drug situation then and what is it now? Which are the best practices and lessons learned? Fortunately we see progress and flexibility within the UN and within CICAD.

Within the UN we now have multiple conventions, drug control and monitoring institutions were added, drugs programs were developed, and at the recent UNGASS a political declaration and action plan were adopted, in other words, the UN has shown its dynamism.

But also within CICAD we have seen developments. CICAD has continuously adapted its programs and the hemispheric drug strategy was renewed on the basis of different evaluation of the drug policies of the

Western Hemisphere and the current global drug problem, and soon we will approve the accompanying Action Plan.

Fortunately, we now see a structural cooperation between CICAD and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC] in the field of the implementation of drug programs in the Western Hemisphere.

The drug situation in the world and the region shows that with collective effort a reduction of drug production can be achieved, both in quantity and size of the crop. We see a better cooperation between countries and organizations. But the threats and challenges have not diminished when we look at the threats of new types of drugs, especially synthetic drugs, but also more sophisticated and transnational criminal organizations and their operating methods.

Key issues and challenges in the field of drugs that present themselves, that we should not go out of the way and where we must take responsibility for the complex issue of the ever-changing drug problem and address it in a timely and comprehensive fashion based on a science and evidence-based approach.

This CICAD session in Suriname will not give answers to all these questions, but we should initiate this discussion here.

And fortunately we do see on the agenda the topic to deliberate on the 50th CICAD session and I think it is good that within the framework of the 25th anniversary we are allowed to discuss the above issues, let us initiate this in Suriname.

With these words I also express that we need to address a number of serious issues at this CICAD meeting:

- our approval of the Plan of Action is also on the agenda
- our hemispheric evaluation report is on the agenda
- our annual report for the General Assembly of the OAS is on the agenda
- how are we going to approach the 6th MEM evaluation based on lessons learned and the newly approved instruments of the new drugs strategy for the Hemisphere and its Plan of action.
- we have two important panel discussions listed on the agenda on smokeable cocaine use and juvenile drugs related offenders.
- However, next to this serious work we also have several relaxing moments with typical Surinamese flavors and colors.

Once again, welcome to Suriname, welcome to CICAD 49 and enjoy your stay in Suriname.

Thank you.