

REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF
THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES,
JOSÉ MIGUEL INSULZA
Thirty-ninth regular session of
Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)
May 11, 2006

- ✓ Ambassador MAURICIO DORFLER OCAMPO, Vice Minister of Foreign Relations and Chair of CICAD
- ✓ GENERAL PAULO ROBERTO UCHOA, National Anti-Drug Secretary of Brazil and Vice Chair of CICAD
- ✓ Mr. JAMES MACK, Executive Secretary of CICAD
- ✓ Mr. ABRAHAM STEIN, Deputy Executive Secretary of CICAD
- ✓ Distinguished Representatives of the member states to CICAD
- ✓ Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good morning. I had planned to accompany you and speak to you during the inauguration of this regular session of the Commission, but Tuesday, I was attending the inauguration of the new President of Costa Rica, Oscar Sanchez Arias. I am pleased that the schedule of activities was flexible enough to allow me to address you during the session.

In December this year, CICAD will be celebrating its 20th anniversary. I believe this is a magnificent occasion to examine and analyze its accomplishments and what lies ahead in our mutual commitment to confront the dangers of illicit drugs in our hemisphere. In the past decade, there has been an important change in the tone and content of the Inter-American dialogue on drugs: the principle of shared responsibility, agreed to for the first time in the Hemispheric Anti-Drug Strategy of 1996, has strengthened the multilateral commitment of the countries in this concern.

All over the hemisphere, with ever stronger conviction, the importance of working together is recognized and the urgency of working together, exchanging ideas

and experiences, thinking in plural and in the regional future since this is the only way to confront and fight the drug issue.

CICAD is a clear example of this dynamic and the activities and proposals that CICAD has considered, reviewed and approved here, such as the work of the Inter-Governmental Working Group on the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism and the comparative study of the use of drugs in South America and so many other joint initiatives, constitute a sample of the strong commitment that the member states have for the fight against drugs and their related crimes and for success of the multilateral work. Without exception, we share a profound sense of shared responsibility among our member states and international organizations.

This week has been of vital importance for the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism since you have considered and approved the follow-up reports on the Implementation of Recommendations of the Third Round. The goals are to identify the strengths and weaknesses, the advances and shortfalls in each member state's efforts on the drug issue. What's more, It is important to underscore that this final phase has permitted the countries the possibility of requesting assistance from CICAD to implement the recommendations with the highest priorities and thus to strengthen national anti-drug policy. These recommendations are tools that you should use in your countries to design, establish and fine-tune policies and programs that respond most effectively to the problem facing us. Over the past three rounds of evaluation, the recommended actions, now numbering more than one thousand recommendations, have permitted the MEM to become a central pillar of hemispheric cooperation in the fight against all the factors that make up the drug problem.

Yesterday with the approval of the national reports of the Follow-up on Recommendations, the Third Round of Evaluation has culminated with the full participation of all member states of the Organizations. These reports have been perfected in terms of relevance, quality of information and depth of analysis in comparison with previous reports.

In addition to the achievement of completing the Third Round of Evaluation, I am pleased to note that the proposals made during the ninth meeting of the Inter-

Governmental Working Group to strengthen the MEM were approved before the next round of evaluation. The member states have invested a lot of time and effort since last August in the review and modification of the MEM process. And the countries have shown interest and a high degree of commitment so that the MEM becomes an instrument that is more efficient, more transparent, more useful and more reliable. I am sure that this outcome will strengthen the Mechanism and will continue to consolidate, not just in the region, but also in the world as an example of cooperation and dialogue in our hemisphere and represent a contribution to the design of policies and programs in the struggle against drugs.

The MEM is driven by the political support that it receives from each country, without which the Mechanism would lose its relevance. It is necessary to stimulate the participation of all levels of government, promoting the cooperation among the countries of the Americas. The MEM has earned broad recognition during the Third Round. However, governments should have greater awareness of its importance and potential and manifest their support more explicitly. At the same time, policy and specialized organisms should recognize the value of this product and use it as a guide for the design and implementation of public policies and programs. I wish to encourage you in this effort since your participation confirms your commitment to the Mechanism and to CICAD in general. Your presence and commitment constitutes taking the flag of this cause to your respective governments, and increasing the political and, particularly, financial support to the MEM at the start of its Fourth Round 2005-2006.

Just as the MEM has shown how cooperation among member states can yield a consensus-based tool, the scientific research that has been carried out by the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs is also an example of cooperation among countries to achieve a diagnostic of drug consumption trends.

During yesterday's session of CICAD, the Observatory in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime presented the findings of a comparative study on drug consumption in South American countries. This report gives us an up-to-date, valid and reliable diagnostic on the use of drugs and risk factors and the protection associated to the use of these substances in the population of school students.

At the same time, these studies permit, for the first time, information that is strictly comparable among the countries. Even more important is the fact that countries that did not have national statistics now will have a tool available to them for making substance abuse reduction policies. On the other hand, countries that have this type of information can evaluate the impact of those policies and programs that they have put in place.

Work has already begun on plans to expand this collaboration in 2007 to other regions in the hemisphere. The goal is to extend this joint effort in a formal agreement between the Executive Secretariat of CICAD and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. At later dates, the scope of coordinated surveys and findings will expand to Central America and the Caribbean in diverse themes related to drugs.

In the previous meeting, I referred to the importance of horizontal cooperation among countries as a form of assisting CICAD in carrying out its projects. Examples of this are the agreements of horizontal cooperation signed with Chile for training in the area of prevention, and with Brazil for training in the area of research and education on drugs. It is important to mention that there are other ways of supporting CICAD in the execution of its projects through the principle of multilateral cooperation, a concept for which CICAD is amply recognized. For instance, some countries have suggested new ways of financing the Commission with assets seized from criminal organizations. I would like to follow up on this idea and develop it further.

We know that millions of dollars are invested in actions and programs to detect and confiscate assets resulting from criminal activities, such as drug trafficking and money laundering. I remind you that the CICAD's Model Regulations for the Control of Money Laundering was modified last year to achieve more effective seizure mechanisms for seizure of illicit assets.

Only in the area of money laundering, our member states seize over a billion dollars a year. Channeling a small percentage of this cash flow to CICAD would guarantee the execution and sustainability of training programs with the objective of destroying the financial basis of crime and supporting programs for drug abuse prevention and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts.

For this reason, I urge the commissioners, if their national legislation so permits, to allocate to the Commission, in a regular and permanent form, a percentage of less than one percent of confiscated goods in those countries. If this type of contribution is not contemplated within the judicial framework of your nations, I encourage you to work towards its modification. The Executive Secretary has assured me that its experts are available to assist you in reviewing and creating the necessary statutes.

This invitation to consolidate CICAD's mission of technical assistance is not new. The United Nations Convention Against Organized Crime includes this type of option, and the countries would only allocate funds that had been obtained illegally so as to control a phenomenon that implies an unequal fight between powerful criminal organizations and law enforcement agencies with scarce funds. I trust that the member states will support this initiative. Both you and I believe in the technical capacity of this Commission.

We face, without a doubt, ladies and gentlemen, a worldwide, dynamic, multifaceted problem. It is precisely for that reason that we must have an integral vision, a commitment for multilateral cooperation. I am convinced that renewed and strengthened international cooperation is the best strategy so that our countries see concrete results in the hemispheric fight against drugs and crime.

I am sure that this regular session that ends today will contribute to binding together a common front and establishing measures and policies in the anti-drug struggle. It depends on us.

Thanks you very much.