



ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION

cicad

**PRESENTATION BY THE GENERAL COORDINATOR
OF THE GOVERNMENTAL EXPERT GROUP (GEG)
TO THE THIRTY-NINTH REGULAR SESSION OF CICAD**

**THIRD ROUND
OF THE MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM)**

May 3, 2006

Distinguished Delegates:

First, may I extend my best wishes, as the General Coordinator of the MEM's Governmental Expert Group, for a successful meeting.

As you will recall, the thirty-seventh regular session of CICAD, held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on April 26 to 29, 2005, received the GEG's report on the first phase of the Third Evaluation Round, and adopted the National Reports and Hemispheric Report that were subsequently published in June of that year.

This GEG report covers the second stage of the evaluation process: the follow-up on the recommendations assigned during the Third Evaluation Round of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, measuring countries' progress in compliance with each of the recommendations assigned to them in the national reports. It is important to recall that these recommendations underscore the relevant points requiring attention and represent the perfect instrument for evaluating the countries' capacity for response under the framework of the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere.

As regards to the methodology used, the procedures were similar to those applied in the first stage: in other words, the information provided by the countries in the Follow-up Questionnaire was analyzed in accordance with a series of evaluation criteria previously established by the GEG and expanded in light of the new situations detected during the process. In addition, four Working Groups were set up, each comprising between eight and nine experts from various disciplines, responsible for the reviewing and preliminary drafting of either eight or nine draft reports; later, each of these drafts underwent joint review and discussion at plenary sessions when, if appropriate, modifications agreed on by consensus were incorporated. In this way, the reports were enhanced with various valuable contributions from the experts, thus complying with the mandate of objectivity, multilaterality, and transparency that characterizes the MEM. Note should also be made of the constant logistical and professional support provided by the MEM Unit Staff and the specialists of the CICAD Secretariat throughout the entire process.

During this stage, the group of experts attended a first drafting session on November 14 to 18, 2005, and a second session on March 20 to 24, 2006. It should be noted that at the first review session, the countries had only had the space of four months in which to report their progress with implementing the recommendations; some of these could be attained in the short term, but other, more complex ones required longer implementation periods, particularly those involving amendments to laws and regulations. In this way, the experts prepared a preliminary draft of each report, in which they requested the countries to update statistics, elaborate on the information furnished, or clarify contradictory or confusing details.

For the Second Drafting Session, it was agreed that each of the four working groups would conduct preliminary work from their home countries, with each expert instructed to draft the preliminary report on one of the assigned countries and, subsequently, for all the members of the group to review those reports together by means of e-mailed exchanges of information. This preliminary work was intended to speed-up their on-site efforts at the drafting session and, above all, to ensure that the Plenary had adequate time to pay due attention to all the reports.

Specifically, the GEG evaluated the information submitted by the 33 countries participating in this phase, covering 498 recommendations broken down among the MEM's four thematic areas:

- I. Institutional Strengthening – 84
- II. Demand Reduction – 152
- III. Supply Reduction – 97
- IV. Control Measures – 165

This breadth and diversity of information required exhaustive work from the experts so they could, in consideration of the particular context of each country, interpret the data, assess the information, include or delete specific texts submitted by the countries, maintain or check off recommendations, and decide on the final conclusions to summarize the evaluation process.

The analyses and results of the evaluation conducted during the Follow-up on the implementation of the MEM's Third Round recommendations are described in detail in the Hemispheric Report that is to be submitted to this Commission for approval. However, notice should be taken of the significant progress recorded during this round in all the thematic areas assessed, with a total of 27% of the recommendations completed, 54% in progress, and only 19% of the total not begun. At the same time, although progress was made in all the thematic areas, the greatest advances were made in the fields of supply reduction and control measures, both in the Caribbean and Central America as well as in North and South America. The modest results obtained in demand reduction are possibly due to the fact that those recommendations are long term concerns.

Reiterated Recommendations

The issue of reiterated recommendations has been a matter of serious and problematic concern to the GEG, because noncompliance by the countries compromises the credibility of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism itself.

The Third Round has maintained 38 recommendations from the First Evaluation Round, 1999-2000 and 71 pending from the Second Round, 2001 - 2002. Most of these deal with the ratification of international legislation, such as the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three Protocols and the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters. Although the evaluation questionnaire requested that they be adopted domestically in accordance with international law, in some countries compliance with this is not seen as a priority or it is claimed that ratification is not possible for constitutional reasons. Secondly, some repeated recommendations deal with the introduction of Minimum Standards of Care, followed by issues related to drug-use information.

Of all the repeated recommendations, 53% were assigned to Caribbean countries, 27% to South American nations, 14% to those of Central America, and 6% to countries of North America.

The total number of recommendations of this kind could well fall during the next evaluation round, as a result of the elimination of the indicators on which they are based.

The Case of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

The GEG reports that it was unable to assess the Follow-up of the Third Round recommendations assigned to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines because the country provided no information on its progress with the 16 recommendations it was assigned during the complete evaluation phase.

In light of this problem, the GEG believes it would be useful to carry out an in-situ visit to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in order to analyze, in conjunction with the national authorities, the constraints that exist and the conditions that would enable the full participation by the country in the Fourth Evaluation Round.

The successful experience of the in-situ visit carried-out to Antigua and Barbuda during this Third Round allows this proposal to be seen with optimism.

Conclusions

In the MEM's Third Evaluation Round, which began in 2004 and is concluding with the Follow-up Report on the Country Recommendations and the Hemispheric Report, significant achievements were noted in comparison with the earlier rounds. On the one hand, the replies submitted by the countries show higher standards in the quality and quantity of information they contain; on the other, the experts have shown increasing maturity and a healthy critical outlook, enabling them to identify shortcomings and the need for adjustments in certain areas of the evaluation process.

In sum, it can be said that in the Third Multilateral Evaluation Round, the improved quality of the evaluation reports can be seen in both their drafting and their content, both characterized by greater precision and uniformity. In that context, mention should be made of the following quality-related aspects of the reports:

- § Definition and use of a series of standardized evaluation criteria, for the objective and harmonious management of the information available.
- § Refinement of each report in three different review phases: first, by the expert responsible for the draft report on a given country; second, within the corresponding working group, made up of eight or nine experts; and, finally, by the plenary, with the participation of the members of the GEG.
- § Availability of support provided by specialists from the various areas of the CICAD Secretariat.
- § Support from the MEM Unit Staff in organizing and distributing all the information to be used by the experts, and in drafting the descriptive paragraphs of the report, which enabled the experts to focus more closely on the substance of the evaluation.
- § Much of the experts' work was undertaken in their home countries: they were organized into working groups that worked on line, interconnected with each other by e-mail and with the MEM Unit, using the Internet to access the information available from CICAD and from other international agencies, such as the UNODC and the INCB. This preparatory work played a key role in resolving most of the problems prior to the drafting sessions, thus enabling the

established goals to be attained within the set deadlines and with a product of optimal quality.

- § During the Third Round, the first **in-situ visit** was carried-out, in order to gain first-hand knowledge about the constraints and problems keeping a specific country from full participation in the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism process. The success of that first experience encouraged us to repeat it for other countries faced with similar situations.

I would finally like to state that, in the GEG's view, while the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism has made the progress described in this report, there is still room for improvement in the process, and it must be continually updated in order to successfully meet the ever-changing challenges posed by the drugs problem and related activities.

In concluding, I would like to thank, both personally and on behalf of the Governmental Expert Group, the invaluable support given by Mr. James Mack, Executive Secretary of CICAD, and by Mr. Abraham Stein, Deputy Executive Secretary; by Dr. Mariana Souto, Deputy General Coordinator of the GEG; by the MEM Unit Staff under the leadership of their Coordinator, Ms. Angela Crowdy; by the Secretariat's specialists; by the logistics staff; and by the translation and interpretation teams. Without their support, the results that we today so proudly present as a task completed would not have been possible.

Thank you very much.