



17th St. & Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
United States of America

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P. 202.458.3000
www.oas.org

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**REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENTAL EXPERT GROUP (GEG)
OF THE MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM)**

**REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENTAL EXPERT GROUP (GEG)
OF THE MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM)
TO THE FIFTY-FOURTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE
INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION (CICAD)
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Distinguished Officials, Members of the Commission, and delegates to this fifty-fourth regular session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, I greet you on behalf of the Governmental Experts Group (GEG), of the Sixth Evaluation Round of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), in the capacity as General Coordinator of the GEG, being duly elected at the GEG Preparatory Session of the GEG in August 2013.

The Sixth Evaluation Round commenced in March 2013, with a new methodology, different from that used of the previous rounds. The evaluation is based on countries level of implementation of the twenty-seven (27) common recommendations, on which member states will be evaluated. These recommendations are based on the Hemispheric Drug Strategy and its Plan of Action for the period 2011-2015, and focus on five areas: Institutional Strengthening, Demand Reduction, Supply Reduction, Control Measures and International Cooperation. All 34 countries submitted their responses to the MEM Sixth Round Survey.

The Preparatory Session of the GEG, held in Miami, 27 to 28 August 2013, had the participation of Experts from all 34 member states. The meeting provided both new Experts and those who served in previous evaluation rounds with guidelines required to evaluate and prepare the national draft evaluation reports.

The establishment of five working groups, to prepare the thematic evaluation of the country reports, was also carried out at the Preparatory Meeting, with set timelines for the drafting and review of the reports, prior to the GEG Plenary Session review in November 2013.

The First Plenary Session of the GEG, held 18 to 23 November 2013, in the Dominican Republic, had the participation of Experts from 30 member states. At this meeting, it was decided by the majority to proceed with the election of the GEG Deputy General Coordinator, a pending matter from the GEG Preparatory meeting in August. Emilia Ramírez Alfaro, Expert from Costa Rica was voted by a simple majority as the GEG Deputy Coordinator. Experts from four (4) countries abstained from the vote due to a disagreement with the naming process of the candidate. An Expert intervened to propose the candidate which was the only nominee up for voting. This item was not on the draft or approved agenda.

The assignment of the GEG task at the Plenary Session was to review the draft evaluation reports consisting of nine hundred and eighteen (918) recommendations for thirty-four (34) countries (27 per country). These reports were drafted thematically as described earlier, through two (2) meetings by the working groups on Demand Reduction, and Control Measures, and online work by the other working groups. Members of the five thematic working groups reviewed and analyzed the information from countries and have proceeded to evaluate objectively and in accordance with the guidelines established for this evaluation process.

As previously reported, this was a new evaluation round with a new methodology, seeking to use a set of

criteria, in accordance with interpretive notes and thereby apply an evaluation scale ranging from, 'Not Applicable,' to 'Complete.' For a variety of reasons, which I will explain in a moment, the GEG did not complete its work during the Plenary Session.

There were challenges in two of the thematic areas: Demand Reduction (Recommendations 4 to 10), and Supply Reduction (Recommendations 11 to 15). With regards to Demand Reduction, the text required adjustments in alignment with the criteria. The GEG therefore agreed to review the reports in this thematic area, in accordance with decisions adopted by the GEG, to adequately reflect the spirit of the recommendations.

In the area of Supply Reduction, the recommendations focused on the issue of illicit crop cultivation, alternative development, and the illicit supply of drugs. A significant amount of the Plenary Session was spent discussing the issue of the applicability or not of recommendations 11-15 related to eradication, alternative development programs or activities to some countries without significant illicit crop areas, and illicit supply of drugs. It was noted that the issue of 'not applicable' was used in previous evaluation rounds of the MEM, particularly for the topics covered by recommendations 11-15 for countries not considered as major producer countries.

Consequently, the Plenary Session was adjourned for a couple hours on the third day, to allow the Working Groups on Demand Reduction and Supply Reduction, to identify the specific difficulties and develop possible solutions to the areas of differences. The discussions were lengthy and difficult. Significant amount of time was spent discussing the issue regarding if it was appropriate or advisable to encourage non-producing countries to develop and implement alternative development programs.

Consensus on resolution to challenges which emerged during discussions proved to be elusive at times, but, it was achieved. Several views expressed were parallel to others views and therefore did not meet at a common point. This situation required some degree of flexibility by Experts. Some Experts requested that I report that, according to their point of view, difficulties arose when the GEG as a whole failed to understand national realities of some countries, lack of analysis of information presented and application of the six (6) levels under the evaluation scale. Also, these Experts think that some participants were not thoroughly familiar with the manual of the evaluation criteria and this posed a challenge.

Distinguished Commissioners, I am pleased to inform you that after prolonged, protracted, but careful deliberations, it was decided to maintain the evaluation scale outlined in the Handbook of Evaluation Criteria. However when evaluating recommendations 11 to 15, the GEG would not apply any of the levels of the evaluation scale for countries not considered as major producer countries. In this regard, Commissioners, the GEG requests your approval to adopt the consensus of the GEG, to use the term, 'Not Applied,' for the evaluation of recommendations 11 to 15, where appropriate. The text to be drafted for the said recommendations would aim to adequately reflect the situation in those countries. The draft reports would be submitted to you later in 2014 for your approval.

Indeed, the thematic area of supply reduction would require some in-depth discussion at subsequent meetings of the Inter-Governmental Working Group (IWG), as it relates to matters of alternative, integral and sustainable development.

The Supply Reduction working group is scheduled to meet in Washington, D. C., 8 to 9 January, 2014. The group will re-draft the corresponding sections as agreed in the November Plenary Session, and as

approved by you.

Commissioners, it would be difficult at this stage to present any preliminary findings to you, given the situation described earlier. Due to this situation, the GEG Plenary did not finalize the review of the 34 reports.

While the new methodology for the Sixth Evaluation Round posed some challenges, it provided the GEG with the opportunity to be reflective on experiences in previous evaluation rounds, and to identify areas of agreements.

It was also expressed by some Experts that there was deficiencies in the levels of preparation and review of pertinent documentation for the Plenary Session; a need for greater participation by some Experts in the discussions, and the need for corroboration and cross-referencing of information provided between thematic areas. Also, many of the Experts expressed that in order to further active participation it is necessary to respect the opinions of others, attentive attention to arguments raised by Experts to support different views which will also advance in an efficient way the work assigned to the GEG.

Given the situation aforementioned, and the significant amount of work remaining for the GEG to complete its review of the 34 draft evaluation reports, the GEG Plenary is proposing another in-person Plenary Session at the end of February 2014 to complete the review of the evaluation reports as mandated. Once the GEG has completed its work in February, and the draft evaluation reports sent out to countries, preliminary results of the draft reports can be presented in the CICAD Spring Session, and the full report in November 2014.

Commissioners, despite the challenges, the GEG expresses its unequivocal commitment to the MEM. The GEG is committed to draft and evaluate thirty-four country reports which accurately reflect the drug control status of the implementation of the Hemispheric Strategy and the Plan of Action of these countries. The thematic working groups and Experts did a tremendous amount of work in drafting their country reports, both prior to and during the Plenary Session. This work was done despite the challenges mentioned previously. This is a clear signal of their commitment to the MEM.

On behalf of the GEG, I wish to thank CICAD, and in particular the MEM Section, for its sterling support and immense contribution to the GEG. I also wish to thank the members of the GEG for their unequivocal support in this process.

Distinguished Commissioners, the GEG assures of its highest regards. Thank you.