

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES



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cicad

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**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF CICAD, Mr. PAUL KENNEDY, TO
THE 35TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE
CONTROL COMMISSION (CICAD)
APRIL 27 - 30, 2004**

**OPENING STATEMENT FOR THE 35TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE INTER-AMERICAN
DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION (CICAD)
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Introduction

- Secretary General of the OAS, Dr. Gaviria, Vice-chair, Señor Gautreaux, Executive Secretary, Mr. David Beall, and distinguished Commissioners.
- Good morning and welcome to the 35th regular session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission.
- Secretary General Gaviria, on behalf of the Commission, I want to express to you what an honour it is to have you join us here today.
- Under your notable leadership you have extended tremendous support and guidance for CICAD — so thank you for being here. I look forward to hearing your insights on the work and future direction of the Commission.
- I also want to add that it has been a pleasure chairing this Commission over the last several months. I have had the opportunity to work closely with the Secretariat and to observe first-hand the commitment and professionalism of the Secretariat's team.

Our Commitment in Montreal

- Let me move on to discussing the work before us.
- As you will recall, at our last session in Montreal the Commission agreed to undertake several initiatives:
 - First, we agreed to renew the Commission's commitment to the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), and to use the MEM to allocate resources dedicated to the drug problem within the Americas in a more strategic, coordinated and effective fashion;
 - Second, we agreed to encourage improved co-ordination and communication among officials in the hemisphere to develop comprehensive, innovative, and integrated approaches to the drug problem and to drug-related organized crime;
 - Third, we committed to undertake a priority-setting exercise at the thirty-fifth regular session to rationalize CICAD's work with a view to addressing both the core mandate of CICAD and the emerging threats more effectively; and
 - Finally, we undertook to encourage our efforts at improving co-ordination, communication and cooperation at borders between CICAD member states.

Since Montreal

- To date, we have moved forward on several of these commitments. This has been possible because of the high level of support, time and effort invested by all states represented here.

- We are dedicating a large part of our meeting this week to finalizing and approving the reports of the second round evaluation of the MEM.
- Each of these reports serves as a reflection of the great effort that member states have dedicated towards advancing multilateral cooperation in the area of drugs.
- As we begin our work on the third round evaluation, it is important to note that as we advance into another round, our goal should always be to build on the successes of the previous round. It is critical that we demonstrate continued progress in each new round.
- Since Montreal, the Commission has also taken steps to bridge the gap between donors and recipient countries by encouraging the major donors of CICAD to provide technical assistance in a much more coordinated and strategic fashion than has been the case in the past.
- On this note, I am pleased to say that Canada has increased significantly its contribution to CICAD this year. This is a reflection of Canada's commitment and confidence in the work of this Commission.
- In addition to the MEM and the major donors group, CICAD has taken steps to encourage cooperation among officials in the hemisphere, by holding several workshops this past winter aimed at sharing policing best practices in such areas as, intelligence-led targeting methods, undercover operations and witness protection programs.
- Significant progress has also been made by the Commission this year to build on earlier work advanced by the Chairmanship of Mexico in the area of organized crime.
- The ad-hoc working group on transnational organized crime developed a substantive plan of action for our consideration during this session. This is a prime example of how we have contributed to the development of a hemispheric approach on the issue of transnational organized crime.
- In an effort to continue this dialogue in the hemisphere, I will be appearing before the Meeting of Ministers of Justice or Attorney Generals of the Americas (REMJA) this week, on behalf of CICAD, to further engage the Ministers on the issue of transnational organized crime.
- In terms of our commitment to encourage communication and cooperation at borders among member states, CICAD is collaborating with CICTE in the development of an OAS Symposium on Cross-Border Management, which will be held in Vancouver, Canada in late August of this year.
- I encourage you all to participate in this exchange of best practices for improving border integrity.
- I had the opportunity to outline CICAD's many achievements on March 17th, when I addressed the Permanent Council of the OAS. I also explained the actions we were taking to build on these successes.

- During my discussion with the Permanent Council I underscored my firm belief that CICAD is a model of an effective and forward-looking entity, one that can serve as an example for the entire OAS.

Expectations for the 35th Session

- Now, looking forward, I think we have an interesting four days before us.
- The agenda includes an important discussion on MEM reports; a discussion on technical assistance and strategic investments; the priority-setting exercise; the report from the ad-hoc group on transnational organized crime; and an added focus on demand-reduction presentations.
- The work we will do over the coming days will set CICAD's course for next year and beyond.
- While there are numerous avenues that CICAD could follow and activities we could undertake, it is essential that we focus CICAD's activities in those areas where we can make a real difference with the limited resources at our disposal.

Conclusion

- In closing, I just want to remind you that we are all here today because we recognize that the drug issue in the Americas is ultimately one of shared responsibility which requires a collective response.
- To establish this collective response we should use our time here together to engage in frank and open discussions on our key agenda items.
- I look forward to participating in active dialogues throughout the week.
- Thank you.