

# ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES



INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION

cicad

**FORTY SECOND REGULAR SESSION**  
November 27 - 30, 2007  
Santa Marta, Colombia

OEA/Ser.L/XIV.2.42  
CICAD/doc. INF. 8/07  
27 November 2007  
Original: Textual

## REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS)

**DR. JOSE MIGUEL INSULZA**

## **Remarks by OAS Assistant Secretary General Albert Ramdin**

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission

Santa Marta, Colombia

November 27, 2007

### **Intro**

His Excellency Francisco Santos Calderón, Vice-President of the Republic of Colombia  
General Paulo Roberto Yog de Miranda Uchoa, National Anti-Drug Secretary of Brazil  
and Chair of CICAD

Mr. Guillermo Francisco Reyes, Vice Minister de Justice of Colombia and Vice Chair of  
CICAD

Distinguished Delegates and Government Officials

Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Representatives of the International Community

Representative of the Secretariat of Multidimensional Security, Mr. Abraham Stein  
Executive Secretary of CICAD, Mr. James Mack

In May, I accompanied you at our last Commission meeting. I perceived first hand the lively policy engagement, the sense of purpose of each delegation, and the real meaning of shared responsibility through dialogue and mutual understanding, not as a political slogan but as a praxis in your proceedings. This year, unfortunately, I am unable to accompany you physically in Santa Marta. But I did not want to address the Commission at its 42 regular session about fundamental issues facing CICAD and the OAS.

Before that, I certainly wish to thank the Government of Colombia for hosting this important event in the beautiful city of Santa Marta. The Colombian Government has made a considerable contribution to the holding of the meeting and is making every effort to guarantee its success. I also want to congratulate the Colombian Government for organizing a very interesting field trip for delegates and will give them a first-hand look at the drug problem in Colombia, as well as the responses they are giving on multiple fronts. It is rare to have a chance to see a

whole array of issues in such geographic proximity, from the impact of illicit crops, alternative development projects, from actions to destroying clandestine processing labs.

You will also have the opportunity to discuss in detail with the public officials of Colombia and I want to thank the Colombian government for being ready to help us in all that is possible.

Ten years ago, CICAD had the foresight to create the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism as the hemisphere's instrument for assessing each country's performance in the fight against narcotrafficking and drug abuse through a participatory, transparent process. I've reviewed your report on the MEM's accomplishments over the past decade. And the results are substantial and striking. But we cannot rest on our laurels. The Chair of the Government Expert Group (GEG) will be reporting to you on what needs to be done to improve the MEM information harvesting process, the GEG proceedings, and the reports themselves.

You are now about to review the 34 MEM country reports and recommendations for the period 2005-2006. I encourage each of you to take your document back to your government and point out where improvements to meet the recommendations are needed. I also urge you to share the report on your country with all the stakeholders in the information gathering process to show them that their contributions did not go to waste. Many people have worked on these reports and in the information of the reports and we should value what they all are recognized.

I also encourage you to look at the reports of other countries. There are often lessons to be learned from the experiences in others.

In response to concerns from several member states about the changing dynamics of both narcotrafficking and drug abuse in the hemisphere, the Commission will be discussing the new emerging trends. The Commission is fortunate that CICAD and its partners already have information systems in place that

are capable of detecting new trends as they develop, and of facilitating an informed discussion for a nuanced, coordinated response. These new low cost systems that make it possible to detect trends, plus the years invested in developing human resources to carry out population surveys, are now paying off. The Executive Secretariat tells me that we are close to completing a baseline measurement of drug use in almost the whole of the Americas, by coordinating standardized, national surveys among secondary school students, households and other population segments to produce regional comparative studies in South and Central America, as well as the Caribbean.

The Commission will be devoting a full day to a thematic discussion on Alternative Development. This debate comes at a time when we already know that there are no easy formulas to the business of coca bushes, opium poppies and marijuana within the larger dynamic of the illegal market. There are many lessons to be learned -- from the donors, from the governments receiving aid, from the agencies implementing projects and from those who find themselves caught in the illicit crop trap, but unable to find viable alternatives of livelihood. CICAD itself has acquired substantial management experience in implementing pilot projects in the Caribbean and the Andes. I am aware that several weeks ago, the Executive Secretariat sent you a position paper to serve as a starting point for your discussion this week and to advance several program initiatives that are within the CICAD's reach, given its budgetary realities, its institutional mandate and available expertise.

I urge you to discuss the issues frankly and transparently so that specific and realistic recommendations can be brought forward to deal with alternative crops.

Also with regard to international cooperation in the area of education, CICAD has often served as a broker for multiple research and educational initiatives that require an overarching catalyst to bridge institutional, national, regional or disciplinary boundaries. The latest such example is the successful launch of the University of the West Indies online certificate program on substance abuse prevention and treatment for the English-speaking Caribbean is the latest example. In addition, next year, Spain's University of Salamanca will be partnering with CICAD

to develop a distance education program on money laundering control that will permit the training of a wider cadre of judges, prosecutors, investigators and financial analysts than was possible in the past to deal with this sophisticated illegal activity.

Likewise, I want to refer to the Drug Treatment City Partnership Program for Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean is just now starting to build up steam, thanks to the funding from the European Commission. The twin city program reaches down to the municipal level to create cooperative bridges across the Atlantic to share practices in prevention, treatment and alternative incarceration for minor offenders. I urge all the national drug commissions to become actively involved, especially by attending the first meeting in Santo Domingo, April 2-5, next year. This opportunity for collaboration between the OAS and the European Commission can serve as an incubator for new approaches to dealing with drug abuse prevention, treatment and minor offenders.

Next year, the United Nations will be undertaking a 10-year evaluation of progress towards meeting the goals on the global drug problem adopted by the General Assembly at its 20th Special Session (UNGASS) in 1998. In March, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs will determine the exact dates of an international conference, but CICAD has already been collaborating closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), especially on how to use information from regional organizations in that assessment. Once again, the MEM is proving a valuable instrument in assessing how countries are dealing with the drug problem.

The General Assembly is the ultimate authority of the Organization of American States. It has a historical and diplomatic tradition for coordinating political interests. In the next the General Assembly, we want to convert it into a more expeditious political body. Each year our General Assembly receives more resolutions, more proposals and this has burdened our work. You will be preparing your resolution in Santa Marta. I ask that you aim to submit a single resolution with a clear focus, succinct language and fresh ideas. Many times, we present many resolutions and that makes the Assembly's work harder.

At my request, the Executive Secretariat has drafted an initial document for discussion that tries to meet these three objectives. I ask that you examine them. I suggest an important theme in it: a proposal that member states consider the possibility of establishing national asset recovery agencies with responsibility for the identification, investigation, seizure, administration, safeguarding and disposal of goods or products deriving from illicit activities. This effort would go a long way towards securing more resources for the fight against drug trafficking and abuse. CICAD is prepared to support member states set up asset management systems.

My dear friends, ladies and gentlemen, I am confident that you will have a successful meeting, as CICAD's meetings are marked by the commitment and enthusiasm that its members place in it. I believe we are on the right path, and I ask you that you provide us, as I know you will, with fresh and innovative initiatives that will deal with this grave problem for our people.