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**INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE  
CONTROL COMMISSION**

**CICAD**

**Organization of American States**

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**ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL  
OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS)  
JOSÉ MIGUEL INSULZA**

## **46th Regular Session of CICAD**

**Miami, November 18, 2009**

I would like to thank the government of the United States of America for the generous support they have provided for the organization of this meeting, the forty-sixth that the CICAD has held in its 23 years of existence. I am also grateful for the hospitality they have shown us, for their cooperation with the Executive Secretariat of the Commission, and for their organization of informative events, which I am sure will be of interest to all the member states, such as the visit to the Drug Court scheduled for tomorrow. And, of course, I would like to thank all of you for your participation in and commitment towards this forum, which is so necessary and so important to the Hemisphere.

Important and necessary, because drug trafficking is a crossborder problem, as are some of the crimes associated with it, such as money laundering and the diversion of precursor chemicals. Along with the terrible effects of this trade, the multiple addictions that it generates affect all our countries without exception. And so this forum – and there should be no doubt in anyone's mind about this – is dedicated to tackling one of the most fearsome threats facing our nations and our peoples.

That first statement must lead us to reflect on the great responsibility incumbent on our states. Indeed, it is a shared evil, but that fact must not lead to the responsibility being diluted among us all; on the contrary, each of our states – and all of us together, working in cooperation – must bolster our ability to tackle and resolve the problem and put an end to this threat.

As I said a few days ago in Santo Domingo, at the Second Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas, on this same topic: “the passivity with which it is dealt in certain places means that it spreads to neighboring countries and beyond” and “the differences in the way we handle crime – and the drugs trade is a central element in crime – have repercussions on the relations between us.” Therein lies the vital importance of forums such as this, which enable us to design policies to benefit our countries as a whole and all the people who inhabit them and who directly suffer its consequences.

The drug problem cannot be addressed, nor can answers to it be offered, out of context. Therein lies the crucial importance we placed on reviewing the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere at our previous meeting in Washington, when we spoke about a new phase in hemispheric commitment to the new challenges and toward the unpleasant realities that drug trafficking brings with it in the fields of health, security, social exclusion, diversion of resources, and, in general, moral decline. And therein lies the need for our states to strengthen themselves internally – first, to address the challenge, and then to multiply that capacity through hemispheric cooperation.

Repeating it does not weaken the importance of the statement: the drugs trade is one of the fiercest enemies of state institutionality and of economic and social development in our countries. Just visualize the tons that are seized – only those shipments that are intercepted – translate them into doses, and convert them into unproductive and untaxable money; just visualize, for a moment, the millions of problem users and the harm they inflict on their families and society; visualize the money needed to provide addicts with medical care and social attention and the money needed to combat organized crime effectively. Those are the reasons why we need coordinating agencies for national drug policies that have a real capacity for containing the problem in both of its two main manifestations: demand and supply.

For that reason, I would like to emphasize some of the topics on our agenda, before concluding with a general panorama of the review of the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere, which is also a part of this meeting.

The first of these topics relates to the agencies responsible for designing and coordinating drug policy. In light of the worrying security information we noted at the ministerial meeting in Santo Domingo, together with the data on drug use we will see here, I must again restate the need to equip the anti-drug effort with the appropriate tools.

Imagination is needed to generate public policies and the ability to manage them, if we are to successfully meet the challenge of drug trafficking and consumption in our countries. For that reason I hope that the efforts invested by CICAD and CARICOM in the Guide for developing public drug policies they have produced bear fruit; but I also hope that this endeavor will be accompanied by the effort needed on the part of each state, improving their personnel and allocating resources for the process. Without that joint effort, it will be much more difficult to attain success in this common undertaking.

The second point has to do with the comprehensive approach to drug policy: an approach that addresses the reduction of both supply and demand. Integrated reduction solutions can have an impact on reducing crime, as shown by the Drug Courts. I am delighted that you will all have the opportunity to see a Drug Court in operation and, in addition, to discuss the replication potential of solutions of this kind: this alternative's effect on recidivism rates among problem users who have broken the law indicates that we would do well to pay attention to that point.

Simply recording increases in usage levels, the types of drugs consumed, and their levels of harmfulness allows us to make important progress. Today, we are no longer in the dark, guessing about problems; the very difficulties posed by the problem have made us more rigorous in studying it and in gathering additional information. And the answers, such as the one offered by the Drug Courts, have to come from informed, pondered decisions.

My third point is therefore related to information and research. You will have the good fortune – not only because the data are auspicious, but also because it is so important that we understand the situation – on current drug use, first, in the Hemisphere and, second, in Colombia. That kind of information is essential if we are to approach our goal with any expectations of success. However, although National Drugs Observatories have evolved encouragingly in many of our member states, their development is not complete. That shortfall in information inevitably leads to public policies that are also going to be lacking and incomplete. In addition, without appropriate information, evaluations are more difficult, and without information, mechanisms such as the MEM could lose their serviceability. To summarize, states must have Observatories as part of the technical apparatus they need to ensure the efficiency of their ability to combat the drugs trade and overcome the problem of drug addiction.

But it is also important that we strengthen our multilateral organization; and, at the same time as we demand that the states expand their capacities, the Executive Secretariat of CICAD must also do the same. During the coming sessions, you will have the opportunity to appreciate the work of the Groups of Experts and see how, with the support of the Executive Secretariat, they have brought about new developments in drug treatment and rehabilitation and have produced guidelines for handling confiscated assets. This is also an activity that largely depends on you. For example, the guidelines for handling assets have been structured in the context of an idea that I proposed here some years ago: that part of the funds seized in drugs crimes and related offenses

be invested in the Executive Secretariat of CICAD – and I emphasize the fact that it should be an investment – to maintain programs that can help expand the capacities of our member states.

All these matters are related to the review of the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere, and a working group tasked with that will be meeting in parallel to this event. Along with emphasizing the countries' participation in this effort to review our strategy and Brazil's coordination of that task, I hope that you will be able to bring it to a conclusion by satisfying many of the issues I have already referred to: comprehensive policies, joint responsibility, strengthening the agencies responsible for responding to this complex problem, international cooperation, and, above all, the political will to make something more than a rhetorical listing of those points.

This, for us, could be a new beginning. Today, as never before, we have information, experience, and results within our reach. In addition, our perceptions of this topic and our ways for dealing with it are evolving. The host nation of this event, which I once again thank for its support, has for the first time ever filed its candidacy to chair the Commission, at a time when it has reoriented the way in which it wants to address the drugs problem. I do no doubt that this eagerness will be fundamental in the future of our activities.

In closing, I would like to extend my most sincere thanks to María Teresa Chadwick for her work as chair of CICAD. Her leadership has been felt during the past year and her efforts have been very important in bringing about the new beginning that is open to us and that I hope will continue under the chairmanship of whomever you decide to elect at this meeting.

And, once again, I thank all of you for your efforts and for the constant dedication with which you tackle this vital task, and I wish for you to continue to make progress with the design and execution of an agenda that can gather together the hundreds of components that must be combined and the thousands of actions that must be taken to address a problem that is so variable, with so much power, and with such a capacity for destruction as the one we face.

Thank you very much.