



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

Organization of American States

P. 202.458.3000
www.oas.org

INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE

CONTROL COMMISSION

CICAD

Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

FIFTIETH REGULAR SESSION
November 2 - 4, 2011
Buenos Aires, Argentina

OEA/Ser.L/XIV.2.50
CICAD/doc.1906/11
25 October 2011
Original: Spanish

**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 50th Regular Session of the
Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)

Presented by the General Coordinator of the GEG,
Carlos Manuel Muralles Pratdesaba,
in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, on November 2, 2011

Members of the Commission and delegates to this 50th Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission.

Allow me to greet to you on my own behalf and on behalf of the Governmental Expert Group (GEG) I am honored to chair. As you know, we are currently in the last phase of the Fifth Evaluation Round of the MEM 2007-2009, assessing how countries are implementing the recommendations submitted to them by the GEG at the beginning of the cycle. For this follow-up effort, the GEG held its First Drafting Meeting in Washington, D.C., United States, between September 26 and October 5, and it will hold its Second Drafting Meeting in early 2012.

I would like to report that the GEG had to begin its work by electing a new General Coordinator and Deputy General Coordinator. This was because the Principal Expert of Brazil, Mr. Rogério Ghesti, who up to that point was serving as General Coordinator, concluded his time as a member of Brazil's National Drug Policy Secretariat and, accordingly, his duties as an expert with the MEM also came to an end; similarly, the Expert from Belize, Iran Tillett-Dominguez, up to that point the Assistant General Coordinator, was unable to attend the meeting. With the position of GEG Coordinator vacant, the experts set about electing a new coordinator. I am proud to report that as a result of that process, I was nominated and elected to serve as the new General Coordinator of GEG, and I am also pleased to report that subsequently, Mr. Dave Alexander, the Expert from Grenada, was elected to the position of Assistant General Coordinator. Dave has ably demonstrated his experience, his ability to build consensus, and his capacity for establishing good relationship with his workmates on several occasions, and those are all qualities that will be of great value to the Group.

In preparation for the meeting, the MEM Section initiated the preliminary drafting of the narrative draft reports submitted by 33 of the countries and sent them to all the experts for review prior to the meeting. Since six countries changed their experts prior to this session, the preparatory work flow faced a number of challenges.

Our first meeting was attended by 38 experts: 32 principal experts and 6 alternates. Regrettably, Nicaragua and Paraguay did not send experts to this meeting.

As the members of the Commission know, over and above each expert's responsibility to review the country assigned to him or her, we are all obliged to participate in the review of all the countries, with the exception of our own. Therefore our working procedure actually operates first on an individual basis, then in each of the four working groups, and finally in the GEG plenary. This will continue to be our working method.

The GEG is following up on a total of 350 recommendations issued during this Fifth Evaluation Round. Of these recommendations, 155 were reiterated from previous rounds. The evaluation of follow-up to the recommendations is underway. As a result of our first meeting, we initiated a dialogue with the countries through notes containing the preliminary evaluation and the GEG's questions. Their replies will be used to prepare the definitive evaluation at the next meeting. As a result of this process, we shall provide CICAD with the reports on follow-up to the Fifth Evaluation Round's recommendations. It should be noted that the timing of the GEG's work schedule enabled all the reports received to be discussed.

The experts have demonstrated increasing maturity and a sound critical attitude. Even though our discussions are sometimes heated, we experts ultimately strive to ensure that our work is in no way undermined and that

all distracting factors are put to one side; because of that, we have been able to identify shortcomings and needs for adjustments to certain parts of the evaluation process.

Lengthy discussions took place on the possibility of withdrawing recommendations that, for various reasons, the experts deemed not to be relevant, either because of their complex wording, hampering their implementation, or because as a result of new information not previously submitted by the countries under review, they could no longer be maintained as a priority according to the technical assessment of the experts present. As a result of those discussions, it was agreed that such recommendations should be discussed by the plenary and that each case should be assessed independently, preparing the way for their discussion and the adoption of a decision on how to deal with them within the working groups.

As the final result of the plenary's assessment, the Group of Experts decided to withdraw 21 recommendations. While the reasons for their withdrawal are specific to each, they include the following:

- The recommendations arose from new indicators that, on account of the initial volume of information and the experts' lack of familiarity with those topics, led to recommendations that on a subsequent examination were deemed not technically appropriate.
- There were also some complex recommendations, difficult to implement because they entailed a series of actions; as a result, a recommendation would be reiterated even if the country had complied with one or several of the requested actions.
- Similarly, some recommendations arose from the need to recommend actions to the countries on account of insufficient information in the initial indicators; thus, some recommendations were issued because of a perceived lack of action or, in some cases, because the information was not reported correctly.

These difficulties, together with group's concern to ensure the quality of the evaluations, meant a lengthy process with intense discussions. It was agreed that to preserve the evaluation mechanism's integrity, these recommendations would be withdrawn, with a note being sent to the countries to inform of the recommendation's withdrawal; it was also agreed that at the next meeting, the reason for withdrawal would be clearly indicated on each recommendation, for it to be included in the final report.

In concluding, I would like to extend my acknowledgement of the support that the experts' work received from the CICAD Executive Secretariat, specifically from Ambassador Paul Simons, the Executive Secretary of CICAD, Mr. Rafael Franzini, and the Secretariat's specialists. Similarly, I acknowledge the invaluable and invariably professional and committed involvement of the MEM Section staff, led by Angela Crowdy, without whose support it would be impossible to discharge the tasks assigned to us.

That brings my report to a conclusion; thank you for your attention, and remain assured of my highest esteem and consideration.

Thank you very much.