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**ADDRESS BY GENERAL PAULO ROBERTO YOG DE MIRANDA UCHOA,
CHAIRMAN OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL
COMMISSION (CICAD),
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS).**

ADDRESS BY GENERAL PAULO ROBERTO YOG DE MIRANDA UCHOA, CHAIRMAN
OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION (CICAD),
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41st Regular Session

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In my statement at the opening of the 40th regular session of this Commission, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, I stressed the need to review the hemispheric strategy of CICAD.

The agenda for that meeting provided room for the CICAD Executive Secretariat to hold a discussion of the "10 Years of the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere and the Plan of Action for its implementation: discussion on its revision". I recall very clearly the way I addressed the issue, and that I came out in favor of the idea of such a review.

During the discussion, the great majority of delegations, while agreeing on the need for an update, argued that we should wait for the new United Nations drug strategy.

So it was decided, and today I recognize the wisdom of that majority, especially after taking part in the 50th session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which met in Vienna last March 12-16.

At that meeting, the Commission approved a draft resolution recommending to the United Nations Economic and Social Council the adoption of a new strategy for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for the period 2008 to 2011. That draft, which took into account the deliberations of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its 49th session, will be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly.

Thus we now have a document on which to base our hemispheric debate, and we can adapt to our region the new strategy proposed for the United Nations.

In fact, what we want is that CICAD should define its own regional responses, and that it should be the mentor for hemispheric legal instruments, facilitating international cooperation, encouraging the sharing of responsibilities, keeping our people informed of developments in each of the problems identified, and responding to requests for assistance from member states, in order to enhance their operational capacity and to make the international rules a practical reality within our respective national plans.

On the other hand, over the years we find that the countries of our hemisphere have been making significant progress in dealing with the various issues relating to drugs. That experience includes some particular regional features and can in many cases constitute the most appropriate examples for reproduction in the countries of our region. Thus, it is important to encourage the exchange of experience and good practices among American countries.

During the last session of CICAD, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of our Commission.

On the broader international scene, we are forging closer relationships with other international agencies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the European Union.

This is important, especially when we consider that, within the United Nations, they are now discussing the assessment to be undertaken in coming years of the 10 years that have elapsed since the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in June 1998.

It is well to remember that in 1997 the American states were in the lead in worldwide efforts on the drugs issue. CICAD had already been in place for 10 years, and in that year all 34 member countries of the OAS became members of the Commission.

The Hemisphere then adopted an anti-drug strategy and in 1998 the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, the MEM, was created.

Let us recall the last article of the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere, which declares that “the countries of the hemisphere support initiatives such as holding in 1998 the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, which will address the topic of international cooperation to combat the problem posed by illicit drugs”.

Today, as in 1997, we, the countries of the Americas, will once again be supporting this initiative within the United Nations, and we will remain in the vanguard of the worldwide struggle against drugs, as has been the tradition of CICAD over the last 20 years.

The knowledge of legislation, programs and experiences that the countries of the region have been developing over the years is essential for cooperation. In this respect, by being able to evaluate each other we can have a balanced overview of what is being done and what must still be done on the drugs problem in our hemisphere.

The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism plays an essential role as an important instrument that can help us to strengthen mutual confidence, dialogue and multilateral cooperation for dealing more effectively with the various aspects of the drugs problem.

Today, in the Fourth Evaluation Round (2005-2006), the MEM is already assembling the progress of the individual and collective efforts of all participating countries, demonstrating the results obtained as well as the obstacles encountered, and making recommendations for improving their policies and programs.

The success that has crowned the MEM process is a source of pride for the Organization of American States and constitutes a model for other agencies.

In the area of demand reduction, we find, from the work of the MEM, that countries must make a greater effort to conduct epidemiological studies on drug use among the general population and among specific groups.

Such studies should use a comparative methodology so as to construct a panorama as close as possible to the reality of the drugs problem in the Hemisphere.

In the area of supply reduction, we must stress the importance of the two topics present in the debate scheduled for this 41st session: the sale of drugs over the Internet, and the diversion of chemical precursors. On the first point, we must recall the essential role of cooperation among countries, in particular those that are home to the Internet servers that host the pages used for illicit purposes.

With respect to the second topic, combating the diversion of chemical precursors, the exchange of information, with the intensive use of the export pre-notification system, is essential for avoiding the diversion of these products onto the illicit market.

In the area of treatment and rehabilitation, the countries of the region need to invest in systems that incorporate minimum standards and mechanisms for monitoring those standards. Addressing this matter, which figures as item 13 on the draft agenda, constitutes an important initiative in this area.

Permit me now to go back to a topic that, as I said, is a source of great pride: the MEM.

We have all just received the "Evaluation Report on Implementation of the Recommendations from the Third Round (2003-2004)." We were pleased to see that, of the recommendations received, 54% are being implemented and 27% have been fulfilled. The number of repeat recommendations has also declined, compared to the previous round.

In practical terms, this high level of participation by member states of CICAD demonstrates a clear commitment to the principles of shared responsibility and multilateral cooperation.

As member states have moved into the fourth round (2005-2006), the hemisphere's expectations must be to capitalize on the progress already made and on the lessons learned in the last three evaluation rounds.

We now have an ever better understanding of ourselves, sharing responsibilities, identifying our weak points and the positive ones that can be useful, including in horizontal collaboration projects.

We have a lot to discuss, we have a lot to learn, and we have a lot to accomplish.

Because it is so timely, I would call attention to the important presentation that we will hear this afternoon, when Ambassador Alexandre Addor-Neto, Secretary for Multidimensional Security of the Organization of American States, will explain to us the restructuring of the OAS, including the important process of adapting CICAD to that new organizational structure.

In this respect, and trusting in the discernment of our leaders and the great ideal that inspires our people, let us fulfill our obligations within the scope of our powers, and let us start now by

participating actively in discussions throughout this 41st session now beginning, and in fulfilling the agenda proposed to us.

Here's to a successful meeting!

Thank you very much