

# ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES



INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION

cicad

**GROUP OF EXPERTS ON  
MARITIME NARCOTRAFFICKING  
August 18-22, 2008  
Cartagena, Colombia**

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**FINAL REPORT**

## Executive Summary

The Group of Experts on Maritime Narcotrafficking met in Panama City, Panama from July 16 to 20, 2007. Mr. Jose Abel Almengor, Prosecutor Attorney in drug cases of the Prosecutor's office of Panama served as the Chair for the meeting. During CICAD's forty-second regular session in Santa Marta, Colombia, the Commission received the report and approved the report from that meeting. This included the recommendations and plan of action for the Group. The Commission directed the Group to meet during 2008, execute the plan of action and report back during the Commission during its forty-fifth regular session.

The meeting of the Group of Experts took place in the Naval Club in Cartagena, Colombia from August 18 to 22, 2008. Admiral Hernando Wills Vélez, Commander of the Colombia Coast Guard served as the Chair for this meeting. Forty-five (45) participants representing 14 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, United States and Venezuela) participated in this meeting.

The Group worked on the tasks found in the plan of action presented at the Commission's forty-second regular session. A copy of the schedule of activities for the meeting is attached (Annex I)

The Group of Experts offers the following priority recommendations for the Commission's consideration:

1. That the Commission:
  - **direct** the Group of Experts to continue its work on the issues initiated for consideration and finalizing at the next meeting
  - **accept** the proposed plan of action for the Group of Experts
  - **direct** the Group of Experts to meet during 2009 and implement the plan as proposed, allowing for the consideration of new or emerging issues

## **I. BACKGROUND**

Mr. Jose Abel Almengor, Prosecutor Attorney in drug cases of the Prosecutor's office of Panama chaired the meeting of CICAD's Group of Experts on Maritime Narcotrafficking in Panama City, Panama (July 16 to 20, 2007). The report from this meeting was presented to the Commission during its forty-second regular session in Santa Marta (Colombia). The Commission approved the report and plan of action, directing the Group to meet in 2008. The Government of Colombia offered to chair and host this meeting.

The Group of Experts met in Cartagena, Colombia from August 18-22, 2008 to execute the tasks defined by the approved plan of action.

## **II. PROCEEDINGS**

### **A. PARTICIPANTS**

#### **1. MEMBER STATES OF CICAD**

Forty-five (45) experts representing the following 14 member states participated in this meeting: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, United States and Venezuela.

### **B. SESSIONS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING**

#### **1. OPENING SESSION**

The meeting of the Group of Experts took place at the Naval Club in Cartagena, Colombia from August 18 to 22, 2008. Vice Minister of Justice Gilberto Rafael Orozco welcomed the participants and offered opening remarks. In doing so, he underlined the challenges presented in trying to control the trafficking of illicit drugs by maritime means.

#### **2. WORKING SESSIONS**

The Group of Experts on Maritime Narcotrafficking met in plenary session and in smaller working groups to complete the tasks defined by the Group's plan of action contained in the July 2007 report. The Schedule of Activities for the meeting is attached (Annex I). The tasks addressed included the following:

## **A. Presentations:**

During the meeting, participants delivered a number of presentations on issues related to the control of maritime narcotrafficking.

The delegation of Colombia delivered two presentations. The first focused on Colombia's counternarcotic efforts. The presentation considered the strategies covering a range of areas that Colombia has employed. This includes efforts to reduce demand for drugs on Colombia as well as illicit crop eradication and general counternarcotic results by law enforcement and others in subjects such as interdiction, seizure, etc. The presentation stressed the increased efforts to target the assets (financial and property) of narcotraffickers. Finally the presentation spoke of the growing threat from synthetic drugs.

The second presentation dealt with the new trends in maritime narcotrafficking being noted in Colombia. A majority of illicit drugs and related contraband continue to move by maritime means. A majority of this traffic is going by non-commercial means (e.g. go fast boats, fishing vessels, semi-submersibles etc.). The presentation focused on the new routes and methods of concealment being used. The newest development in routes being used includes the movement of drugs through western Africa and then on to Europe. Narcotraffickers continue to demonstrate great creativity and ingenuity in the methods of concealment that they develop. The presentation also examined the threats that the Port of Cartagena faces and the national inter-institutional approach that is used to respond to these threats.

The delegation of Brazil delivered a presentation on its container control program. The program is characterized by inter-agency cooperation and the exchange of information. The program also relies on the identification and tracking of containers and vehicles through photo (license) identification and specialized tracking chips. The presentation also included information regarding various successes realized through their container control system.

The delegation of Argentina delivered a presentation on its national container control program. While Customs has the lead in this program, it works in partnership with other agencies to control the use of containers to move illicit drugs and related contraband. As in other presentations, the delegation of Argentina stressed the importance of information exchange among the various agencies involved. The presentation also included information concerning successful cases of interdiction.

## **B. Working Groups:**

During the course of the meeting, the Group divided into smaller working groups. In doing so, the working groups considered tasks or issues that originated in the previous meeting and remained to be addressed as well as new issues identified at the beginning of the current meeting. The following is a summary of the activities of the working groups:

### **Model Operating Procedures Manual for joint and combined bilateral or regional interdiction operations**

The delegation of Trinidad and Tobago presented the draft operating procedures manual for the consideration of the Group of Experts. The current draft included comments received following the last meeting in Panama.

A number of participants suggested that since many of those present were new to the Group, the current draft would require a more detailed review. Colombia and the USA presented proposal for the Working Group.

The working group met and reviewed the draft as directed. A revised draft was prepared for distribution to all participants for consultation, review and comments. The new draft is to then be distributed to all participants prior to the Group's next session in 2009 where the draft will be finalized.

### **Effective systemic control of chemical cargoes shipped through ports, in order to prevent their illicit diversion**

The delegations of Brazil and Mexico presented the draft guide that they jointly prepared and invited further input from the participants. A working group was formed to review the draft and expand on the existing text. The new, revised version of the draft will be presented at the Group's next meeting when it will be finalized.

### **Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) Indicators on Maritime Narcotrafficking**

During its March 2008 review of indicator proposals for the Fifth Evaluation Round of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), the Preparatory Intergovernmental Working Group (Pre-IWG) included in its report to CICAD that maritime narcotrafficking should be included as an indicator for the next MEM evaluation cycle, and that the assistance of the CICAD Group of Experts would

be sought in this regard. The CICAD Commission approved the report at its forty-third regular session in April 2008.

Ms. Angela Crowdy, Head of the CICAD MEM Section, briefed the Expert Group on the MEM process and the task assigned to develop an indicator or indicator proposals on maritime narcotrafficking, a topic which had previously not been included in the MEM process. A working group was formed to discuss and develop potential questions for indicator proposals, with representatives from Chile, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Brazil and Venezuela.

The discussion centred in two main areas: port security in maritime narcotrafficking and maritime monitoring and interdiction. Proposals covered questions related to the implementation of the ISPS, port controls, information exchange, maritime counterdrug detection, monitoring and interdiction activities, among others. The Group also recommended that seizures of drugs in ports be reported through the MEM questionnaire, as well as ratification of the IMO Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention 1974 together with its respective 2002 amendment. The Group noted that this information could be captured through the general indicators already included in the MEM questionnaire on ratification of Conventions and drug seizures.

The proposed indicator questions will be uploaded on-line for review by all member states, prior to the February 2009 meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) where all indicator proposals will be reviewed and discussed. The final approval will take place in 2009 during the forty-fifth CICAD regular session prior to the onset of the MEM's Fifth Evaluation Round.

### **Enhance security in free trade zones in ports and free ports**

The issue of port security in free trade zones was the subject of some preliminary discussion during the Group's last meeting. The delegation of Panama presented an outline of a guide on this issue. A working group was then formed to expand on the outline. The delegation of Panama will use the expanded outline and draw on the discussion in the working group to prepare a draft guide for consideration at the next meeting of the Group.

### **Control of Containers**

The control of containers remains an issue of concern brought forward from the last meeting. The delegation of Argentina led a working group that considered this issue and began developing a guide to assist member states in this area. Based on these discussions and preliminary work by the group, the delegation of

Argentina will prepare a draft for presentation and finalization at the next meeting.

### **Control or regulation of companies that repair or remodeling of boats or motors/engines**

A working group was formed to consider a preliminary document on this issue prepared by the delegation of Colombia. Narcotraffickers are modifying the structures of vessels to more easily hide illicit drugs and related contraband. In addition to this approach, narcotraffickers are building semi-submersible vessels in which they are able to transport upwards of 10 metric tonnes of “cargo” with a range of approximately 1,500 miles. The issue of semi-submersibles was added to the scope of the guide on this subject being prepared by this working group. The delegation will prepare the final draft of the guide for presentation at the next meeting.

### **Other Issues:**

In addition to the foregoing, the Group discussed the following issues related to maritime narcotrafficking:

- Information exchange
- New trends and routes in maritime narcotrafficking
- Use of “parasites” attached to the hull of ships in which illicit drugs can be hidden
- Control of Ecstasy: passengers on cruise ships

### **3. PLAN OF ACTION**

The Group of Experts was not able to address all of the issues in its plan of action for this meeting. At the same time, the Group identified a number of other new issues of concern related to the control of maritime narcotrafficking. The Group of Experts proposes the following as its new plan of action:

Preparation of guides, manuals or other papers associated with the following:

**Model Operating Procedures Manual for joint and combined bilateral or regional interdiction operations**

- Trinidad and Tobago

**Effective systemic control of chemical cargoes shipped through ports, in order to prevent their illicit diversion**

- Brazil and Mexico

**Enhance security in free trade zones in ports and free ports**

- Panama

**Control of Containers**

- Argentina

**Control or regulation of companies that repair or remodel boats or motors/engines**

- Colombia

### **4. CLOSING SESSION**

The Group of Experts concluded its work at 12:00 on August 21. The Chair of the Group closed the meeting and thanked the members for their participation.



### III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS

#### RECOMMENDATIONS TO CICAD IN ITS FORTY-FOURTH REGULAR SESSION:

1. That the Commission:

- **direct** the Group of Experts to continue its work on the issues initiated for consideration and finalizing at the next meeting
- **accept** the proposed plan of action for the Group of Experts
- **direct** the Group of Experts to meet during 2009 and implement the plan as proposed, allowing for the consideration of new or emerging issues

#### IV. DECISION BY CICAD DURING ITS FORTY-FOURTH REGULAR SESSION

The Commission accepted the report and recommendations presented by this Group of Experts. The Commission directed the Group to meet during 2009 to continue its work, electing Chile to chair this meeting.

# ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES



INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION

cicad

**WORKING GROUP ON MARITIME  
NARCOTRAFFICKING MEETING**  
August 18-22, 2008  
Cartagena, Colombia

CICAD/inf. 2/08  
May 9, 2008  
Original: English

## SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

*(draft)*

### Monday, August 18

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 08:30 – 09:00 | Registration  |
| 09:00 – 09:30 | Opening Remarks   |
| 09:30 – 09:45 | Introduction and Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Background of Group</li><li>• Schedule of work</li><li>• Proposed work methodology</li><li>• Review of tasks assigned</li></ul> |
| 09:45 – 10:15 | Introduction of participants and “roundtable” identification of additional issues of concern  |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | Break   |
| 10:30– 11:00  | Task 7: Model Operating Procedures Manual for joint and combined bilateral or regional interdiction operations (Trinidad and Tobago)  |
| 11:00– 11:45  | Task 11: Effective systemic control of chemical cargoes shipped through ports, in order to prevent their illicit diversion (Brazil and Mexico)  |

- 11:45– 13:30**      **Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM)**  
Overview by Executive Secretariat and preliminary discussion on identification of potential indicators
- 13:30 – 15:00**      **Lunch**
- 15:00– 17:00**      **Working Groups**
- Control or regulation of companies concerned with the repair or remodeling of boats or motors/engines (Colombia)
  - MEM indicators
  - Information exchange
  - New trends and routes in maritime narcotrafficking
  - Drug testing/identification
  - To be determined based on “roundtable” discussion
- 19:00**              **Welcome Reception (TBD)**

**Tuesday, August 19**

- 09:00 – 09:45**      **Presentation by Colombia**
- 09:45– 10:30**      **Task 12: Enhance security in free trade zones in ports and free ports (Panama)**
- 10:30– 11:15**      **Control of Containers (Brazil)**
- 11:15– 12:30**      **Working groups (*cont.*)**
- 12:30 – 14:00**      **Lunch**
- 14:00 – 15:30**      **Working groups (*cont.*)**
- 15:30 – 17:00**      **Presentations by working groups**

**Wednesday, August 20**

**09:00 – 09:45      Presentation by Colombia**

**09:45– 12:30      Working groups**

**12:30 – 14:00      Lunch**

**14:00 – 17:00      Working groups**

**Thursday, August 21**

**09:00– 12:30      Working groups (*cont.*)**

**12:30 – 14:00      Lunch**

**14:00 – 17:30      Special Activities: Visit to the Port of Cartagena**

**Friday, August 22**

**09:00 – 11:00      Presentations by working groups**

**11:00 – 11:15      Break**

**11:15 – 12:30      Conclusions, commitments and recommendations for  
action by the Working Group**

**12:30 – 13:00      Closing**