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**INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE
CONTROL COMMISSION**

CICAD

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**REMARKS BY
H.E. VICE-PRESIDENT ROBERT AMEERALI
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME**

**Speech of H.E. Vice-President Robert Ameerali of the Republic of Suriname on the occasion of the
Opening of the 49th Regular CICAD session
on the 4th of May 2011 in Paramaribo, Suriname**

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Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen: All Protocols Observed;

On behalf of the President of the Republic of Suriname, I welcome you all at this 49th CICAD session in Paramaribo, Suriname.

We feel very honored that this session is held in our country, and we are very pleased to receive this high level group of dignitaries from regional and international drug control organizations in Suriname.

As host, Suriname wants to offer you every opportunity to discuss in depth the many issues that are current today in the Western Hemisphere in the field of drugs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The drug policy of the Government of Suriname is a translation of the recently adopted Political Declaration and its Action Plan of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs and will be implemented in accordance with UN conventions and regional agreements, to which Suriname is a party. The recent CICAD Hemispheric Drug Strategy and its Plan of Action, which is for that matter on the agenda of this 49th CICAD session, give direction to the Surinamese drug policy.

In fact, I can inform you that CICAD's Hemispheric Drug Strategy and Draft Plan of Action were important guidelines used in formulating the new Suriname National Drug Master Plan. We will very soon establish the National Drug Master Plan as a national document. This makes Suriname probably one of the first countries in the Western Hemisphere that actually implements the goals and activities of CICAD's Plan of Action to be adopted at this meeting.

The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) is also an important focus for us. The Government of Suriname underscores that the evaluation of progress in drug control in the Western Hemisphere is a shared responsibility of all Member States. Suriname is making its contribution by actively participating in the various evaluation rounds. Thus we do not only support the strength of the multilateral mechanism,

we also heed the MEM recommendations for Suriname. We are well aware of the eleven recommendations in the MEM report of Suriname and are seriously implementing these.

In respect of alternative strategies to deal with drug offenders and their reintegration in society, Suriname is currently far advanced in setting up a Drug Treatment Court. And we trust that after all legal requirements are met, we will yet this year start with the Drug Treatment Court.

The Hemispheric Drug Strategy recommends that the authority responsible for coordinating drug policy be positioned at a high political level. The Surinamese government believes that the drug policy should be an integral part of the national security policy that must be effectively coordinated at the highest level. The coordination of this drug and security policy in Suriname is directly under the Office of the President, the highest political authority in the country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of Suriname takes its regional and international commitments seriously in its policy intentions and relevant actions, and wishes indeed, to also play an exemplary role in international drug and security policy.

An important achievement in this context is the fact that we now hold the Chair of CICAD since December 2010. As part of our responsibility as CICAD Chair we have the special task of steadily helping to accomplish synergy within the regional drug policy. This means that we need to fulfill a bridging role in the drug approach of the Caribbean countries, more in particular because of our membership of CARICOM and the Union of South American Nations, UNASUR.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I understand that this year it is 25 years ago that CICAD was established and also 50 years ago that the UN Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs of 1961 was adopted. I congratulate the international and regional community with these milestones. In particular, I wish to congratulate the CICAD community present here today. Indeed, we must evaluate - as stated by the CICAD Chair - the 25th anniversary of CICAD and based on lessons learned and best practices, further strengthen and improve our regional and international drug organizations and policies. I urge you to consider holding a special meeting of CICAD to discuss this aspect in depth.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I underscore that the drug problem is a global problem that we have to address jointly. However in our effort to implement international, regional and sub-regional programs collectively, we need to develop a more coherent strategy on the basis of more synergy among all the organizations and institutions involved in the area of drug control, and on the other hand we need to avoid overlap and duplication of programs. In this regard, Suriname will do anything in its power to support the international and the regional drug control program on the basis of more synergy to maximize the effectiveness based on the principles of collective efforts and shared responsibility.

On behalf of the President of the Republic of Suriname I wish you a fruitful meeting and I hereby open the 49th regular session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Commission!

Thank you.