

**STATEMENT ON
THE PRESENTATION OF THE MEM
TO THE THIRD SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS
to
The First Special Session of CICAD
Washington, D.C. December 13, 2000**

Chairman Selman, Vice-Chairman Camero, Executive Secretary Beall,
Distinguished Delegates:

As Canada's National Coordinator for the Summit of the Americas, it is a pleasure to speak to you today regarding preparations for the Third Summit of the Americas, which will be held in Quebec City on April 20-22, 2001. Let me begin by briefly outlining the Summit process. I would further propose that we then turn to the issue of how the first reports of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism might be considered by our leaders at Quebec City.

Summit Process

As you are all aware, the Heads of State and Government of the thirty-four democratic countries of the hemisphere have met twice this decade to discuss key issues affecting the region: first at Miami in 1994 and then at the Second Summit of the Americas in Santiago, Chile in 1998. Canada was proud to have been chosen in Santiago as the next host of the Summit and looks forward to welcoming Leaders to Quebec City next April.

In an effort to set a broad preliminary agenda for the Summit, Canada circulated a paper to the Foreign Ministers of the hemisphere earlier this year proposing that the Summit focus on three broad themes or baskets: Strengthening Democracy, Creating Prosperity, and Realizing Human Potential. Based upon this paper, the basic principles for the Summit were discussed, and agreed upon, at a Private Dialogue session of Foreign Ministers on the margins of the OAS General Assembly held last June in Windsor.

It was also agreed by Foreign Ministers that the Summit, to be effective and credible, must focus on people. Citizens need to see that Summits work for them and that governments are working together on a coherent agenda that addresses priority issues that affect people's lives.

Since that time, Canada has been working in partnership with all of the countries in our hemisphere to develop a Plan of Action that is focussed and results-oriented, with action items that can be implemented by Governments with the help of institutions such as the OAS. However, in order to ensure that we are able to keep the promises made at Quebec City, it is imperative that the resources necessary to implement action items are available.

Canada believes that the rapid development and spread of information technology presents unprecedented opportunity to connect people and institutions and advance Summit objectives in the areas of governance, economic integration and social inclusion. For this reason, connectivity is a cross-cutting theme that should be used to help us advance our goals in all baskets.

Each of the three Summit baskets contain action items grouped under sub-themes. For example, the Strengthening Democracy basket addresses making democracy work better, human rights, justice, the rule of law and security of the individual, hemispheric security and civil society. Drug abuse control, in addition to criminal activities associated with the illicit drug trade such as small arms trafficking, is an integral part of this basket.

The second basket, Creating Prosperity, addresses the FTAA, financial markets, environment, labour, telecommunications and economic inequalities. Meanwhile, the third basket, Realizing Human Potential, addresses education, health, gender equality, indigenous populations, children and youth and cultural diversity.

Negotiation of the Summit Plan of Action, and its three baskets, as well as of the Summit Declaration takes place at meetings of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), composed of Summit National Coordinators from each of the hemisphere's thirty-four democracies. As host of the Summit, Canada currently chairs these SIRG meetings.

Summit preparations are on track. To date, two SIRG meetings have been devoted to preparations for Quebec City. Negotiations began in October, when the Strengthening Democracy basket was considered at the 19th SIRG in Quebec City. Consideration of the Strengthening Democracy basket continued at the 20th SIRG meeting in Washington last month, while discussions began on the Realizing Human Potential basket.

To ensure the completion of negotiations of the Plan of Actions's three baskets and of the Summit Declaration, three further SIRG meetings will take place before the Summit. The first of these meetings is set for the end of January, where negotiations on the first basket are expected to be completed. The second meeting is scheduled for early March and the third meeting will take place in April, at the level of Plenipotentiary, immediately prior to the Summit itself.

The two SIRG discussions held at Quebec City and in Washington have produced many useful proposals which have strengthened the draft text of the Action Plan. These meetings have demonstrated the depth of the hemisphere's commitment to developing a coherent political, economic and social agenda for the Americas.

Development of MEM

Allow me to turn now to the subject of greatest interest to you, the subject that has brought you to Washington in mid-December.

Leaders of our hemisphere have recognized that unilateral action is not an effective response to either the drug problem or to the related criminal activity which drugs support and engender. As a result, in 1998 at the Second Summit of the Americas, they tasked CICAD with the development of "a singular and objective process of multilateral governmental evaluation" to monitor the progress of individual and collective efforts within the hemisphere to deal with the diverse manifestations of the illicit drug trade.

This was a daunting challenge, but one that CICAD responded to efficiently and effectively. The development of the MEM by an Intergovernmental Working Group, composed of many of you in this room today, in only 6 meetings held over the course of 18 months, constitutes one of the most remarkable achievements stemming from the Santiago Summit.

This is indicative of the impressive achievements that can be made when the countries of the hemisphere come together to confront a common foe and meet a collective challenge. You should all feel a well-deserved sense of accomplishment.

Canada acknowledges the substantial and essential contribution made by the members of the Government Experts Group (GEG), who were tasked with the extremely difficult job of transforming thirty-four country responses to the extensive questionnaire developed by the Working Group into succinct national reports and an overall hemispheric report. The quality of the reports before us this week is evidence of a job done very well.

Canada has been a strong supporter of and active participant in the development of the MEM. We were very pleased that our former Deputy Solicitor General, Jean Fournier, was elected to Chair the Intergovernmental Working Group and were honoured to host the Sixth Meeting of the Working Group in Ottawa in September 1999, where the development of the MEM was completed.

Drugs and the Quebec City Summit

The Quebec City Summit provides us with a unique opportunity to showcase the MEM to Leaders and ensure that the momentum created by the successful completion of the first phase of the Mechanism is maintained. There are at least two complementary ways in which this might be achieved.

The first is through the inclusion of specific recommendations in the Summit Action Plan which will be finalized by National Coordinators and endorsed by Leaders. In this connection, I would propose that the "Drug Abuse Control" section of the Strengthening Democracy basket, which currently contains a statement supporting CICAD and the MEM process, be supplemented with an action item calling for the full implementation of the recommendations contained in the MEM hemispheric report.

I would further suggest that National Coordinators could also consider including in the Plan of Action a few recommendations from the hemispheric report should these warrant special mention, keeping in mind the need to keep the Action Plan as brief as possible by focussing on specific, implementable action items.

On the latter, I would invite CICAD's Executive Secretary to work with you in developing a small and well-targeted number of recommendations, distilling from among the many in the hemispheric report, those few that require special political impetus. I would ask that this final list of recommendations be forwarded to me, in my capacity as the Chair of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management, as soon as possible. In turn, I will undertake to transmit them further in order to allow for their consideration by the SIRG at its next meeting in January.

Meanwhile, you may wish to inform your respective National Coordinators for the Summit of the consolidated shortlist of recommendations for the Action Plan. I also take this opportunity to extend an invitation to the Executive Secretary of CICAD to attend the upcoming SIRG at which the basket on Strengthening Democracy, which includes the section on drug abuse control and related issues, will be finalized.

The second way in which the MEM could be showcased is through the Summit Declaration which is the high profile political statement made by Leaders at the end of the Summit recognizing those issues of greatest hemispheric importance. As Canada's National Coordinator, I can assure you that I will be working closely with all of my counterparts to ensure that the MEM is appropriately emphasized when we are preparing the Declaration.

Finally, as host country for the Summit, Canada would welcome suggestions from CICAD on how we might further "showcase" the MEM at Quebec City. These suggestions, which I expect will emerge from your discussions during this Special Session, should be summarized in writing and forwarded in a letter from Executive Secretary Beall to me, in my capacity as the Chair of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management, again for further transmission and consideration during the Summit preparations.

In closing, I would like to commend CICAD, under the effective leadership of Executive Secretary David Beall, for the impressive results it has achieved in combatting the hemispheric drug problem, and in particular for its effective response to the Summit of the Americas mandate which called for the development of the MEM. CICAD has indeed been a model of institutional cooperation in realizing Summit goals. I wish you, Chairman Selman, Vice-Chair Camero and all delegates, continued success this week and in your future endeavours.

Thank you.