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INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION

cicad

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## **STRENGTHENING THE CONTROL OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF FIREARMS**

**(Presentation to the thirtieth regular session of CICAD by the Executive  
Secretariat)**

## **STRENGTHENING THE CONTROL OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF FIREARMS**

### **Presentation to the thirtieth regular session of CICAD by the Executive Secretariat**

#### **OBJECTIVE**

- Strengthen and/or establish controls over the international movement of firearms among the member states of the OAS consistent with the OAS Convention and CICAD's Firearms Model Regulations

#### **BACKGROUND**

A major concern of CICAD member states is the illegal trafficking of firearms and explosives that are often ancillary to the drug trade. Drug trafficking and the related trafficking of firearms and explosives have long been recognized by member states as constituting an immediate and substantial threat to political stability, democratic institutions, economic development and the economic well-being of the countries of the Americas.

In 1997, the OAS took two major steps to address this concern by approving the Inter-American Convention Against the Manufacture and Illicit Trafficking of Firearms, Munitions, Explosives and Related Materials, which has now been ratified by fourteen countries, and through the development of Model Regulations for the Control of the International Movement of Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition. These Model Regulations are designed to help countries implement the provisions of the Inter-American Convention for the establishment of a system of controls over the import, export and transshipment of these materials. Both legal instruments are innovative initiatives to regulate the licit trade and combat the illicit trafficking in firearms, ammunitions and explosives. So far, the United States and Belize have adopted CICAD's Model Regulations within their national legislation.

In November 1999, in Lima, Peru, and in May, 2000, in Martinique F.W.I., CICAD, in coordination with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-LiREC), convened two introductory seminars on the application of the Model Regulations for senior policy and operational officials responsible for the control of firearms importation, transshipment and export. The seminars also addressed record-keeping and information exchanges of firearms movements in the countries, the degree of the regulations' compatibility with national measures in place and what changes, if any, would be required nationally for the regulations' provisions to be applied.

The participants indicated that the implementation of the Model Regulations would greatly assist them to control firearms diversion. They also noted that a lack of

information sharing among them contributed significantly to the problem of controlling the illegal trafficking of firearms and therefore, the need to implement the Model Regulations within their national legislation.

### **FY2001 CICAD PROGRAM**

To address the problems of information exchange and record keeping and to further train the officers working on the ground among all the relevant national agencies responsible for firearms and ammunition control, CICAD has, again with the UN-LiREC, held three further seminars in the hemisphere. The first of these seminars was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, August 8 – 9, 2001 with participation by Canada and the Caribbean member countries. A second seminar involving the countries of Central America, the Dominican Republic and including presenters from the U.S., Mexico and Canada was held at the University for Peace near San Jose Costa Rica on October 31 - November 1. A final seminar will be held in Brasilia, Brazil in December 18 and 19 for South America and is expected to involve presenters from the U.S., Mexico and Canada.

The purpose of these seminars and follow-up assistance is:

- to further encourage participating countries to adopt CICAD's Model Regulations by presenting a Firearms Manual of Operations to the member states on the proper function of the CICAD Model Regulations;
- to assist the countries in adopting or designating a central office to coordinate information exchange among the national agencies responsible for the control of firearms and ammunition and for exchanging key information on firearms movements at the international level;
- to assist the countries in adopting a national record keeping mechanism for all firearms and ammunition that are imported, exported and transshipped.

As a result of the prior seminars and of a needs assessment undertaken of the legislation of a number of the countries in the Americas it is evident that some of the countries' firearms legislation is out of date and/or not in conformity with the standards established under the Convention or the Model Regulations, or is not being uniformly applied.

Accordingly, further work is needed to assist the countries in updating or establishing national laws and regulations in order to implement the above mechanisms in combating the diversion of firearms and ammunition.

Further, for the application of the control system set out in CICAD's Model Regulations and with respect to the databases and technical assistance that need to be put in place, there will be a need to continue the program through 2002 and beyond.

### **FY2002 CICAD PROGRAM**

In FY2002 CICAD will be providing assistance to the member countries towards:

- the enactment of legislation or regulations controlling firearms that implements the Inter-American Convention and CICAD's Model Regulations;
- the establishment of information-sharing systems among the countries on commercially trafficked firearms and ammunition;
- the establishment or designation of a central point of contact for exchange of information between national agencies and member countries on the international movement of firearms and ammunition;
- implementation of national record-keeping mechanisms;
- the provision of software and hardware and related training for the operation of national record-keeping mechanisms and information sharing system;
- in conjunction with UN-LiREC, implement training programs on law enforcement techniques on identification, tracing and investigation of the international movement of firearms and ammunition for law enforcement officials of the member countries.

The equipment component of the project represents almost seventy per cent (70%) of the total cost. On the basis of similar assistance provided<sup>1</sup>, by country, equipment cost is anticipated to be in the range of U.S. \$50,000. On the basis of funding required and resources available, it will take up to a further two years to achieve the objective in all of the countries of the hemisphere. The Executive Secretariat expects that in part it will share costs and achieve its goals through its on-going collaboration with UN-LiREC with which a Memorandum of Understanding was concluded in early 2001.

## **END-OF-PROJECT SITUATION**

At the end of the project the Executive Secretariat expects that:

- the countries will have legislation in place consistent with the Inter-American Convention and CICAD's Model Regulations;
- an effective information sharing system will be in place for communication concerning firearms movements and for tracing firearms among the benefiting member states;
- central points of contacts will have been established or designated that will better facilitate information exchange between national agencies and member countries on the international movement of firearms and ammunition;
- record-keeping systems will be in place on all exports, imports and transshipments that have passed through the member state;
- participating countries will have received sufficient technical assistance, technology and training to operate these mechanisms on their own;

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<sup>1</sup> The assistance referred to involved a 1999 contribution to the Central Bank of Uruguay for information systems to assist in improving their control over financial operations with respect to money laundering.

- law enforcement officials responsible for this matter in the member countries will have been trained in methods for tracing, identifying and investigating the illicit international movement of firearms and ammunition.