



# ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION

cicad

**THIRTY-FOURTH REGULAR SESSION /  
November 17-20, 2003  
Montreal, Canada**

**OEA/Ser.L/XIV.2.34  
CICAD/doc1290/03  
13 November 2003  
Original: Textual**

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR  
THE HONOURABLE WAYNE EASTER  
SOLICITOR GENERAL OF CANADA  
AT THE OPENING OF 34TH REGULAR SESSION OF  
THE INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION  
(CICAD)**

Draft - November 13, 2003

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR**

**THE HONOURABLE WAYNE EASTER**

**SOLICITOR GENERAL OF CANADA**

**AT THE OPENING OF 34TH REGULAR SESSION OF  
THE INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION**

**(CICAD)**

**MONTREAL**

**NOVEMBER 17, 2003**

Draft - November 13, 2003

Bienvenidos todos y todas. Welcome to Canada and the beautiful city of Montreal.

It is a great pleasure to represent the Government of Canada here today. Canada is committed to the work of CICAD and proud to host this important meeting.

As the world becomes more global and interdependent, fora like CICAD become even more significant.

My personal appreciation for the value of working together in an increasingly borderless world took root in an earlier life. Before my election as a Member of Parliament in 1993, I was a farmer – in fact my wife and I still own a farm on Prince Edward Island in eastern Canada.

I became acutely aware of the need for international cooperation when serving as President and CEO of the National Farmers Union for 11 years and participating in international commissions on agriculture and trade. I learned just how much cooperation across borders is essential to the health of each country's agricultural sector. And more than that, border cooperation is essential at the local level, to the well-being of farming communities and farming families in each country.

It's the same with the issues we're dealing with here at CICAD. No country's police, health care systems and courts are strong enough to counteract illicit drugs and organized crime on their own. We have to help each other build the institutional and law-enforcement capacity. Otherwise we just move drug cultivation or trafficking to our neighbour's territory and nothing changes. Because whether or not we work across borders, organized crime will.

We need collaborative action. We need to help each other build the capacity that every country needs to minimize the harms of illicit drugs and organized crime within its own borders. That is the only way to promote the well-being of our communities and our citizens. CICAD is the key organization that can take on this task in the region.

Canada is a relatively new player to the Organization of American States. But we have been committed to CICAD since the beginning. We are enthusiastic, willing to work hard and committed to the organization.

We are proud to have played a key role in the inception of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism – or MEM. The MEM is an important step down the path to greater integration of our collective efforts. As we head into the third round of the MEM, we are beginning to see it bear fruit.

It is a guidepost, a reminder of our collective responsibilities and an inspiration for what we can achieve – in short it is a living document that puts our discussions here into action. The MEM helps our shared views, best practices and opportunities come alive and it gets more effective with every round.

Canada envisions the countries of the Americas using the MEM to identify our drug control needs and deficiencies, to evaluate our progress in addressing the drug problem, and to guide our policy development and operations in the areas of drugs and drug-related crime.

I know CICAD has also seen other successes lately. Member states are addressing critical law enforcement issues and looking hard at cross-border cooperation. I was heartened to hear about the many innovative projects taking place in the hemisphere such as the project in the Dominican Republic where the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada's national police force, is promoting community policing principles to counteract the transit, supply and use of illicit drugs.

These projects exemplify the pragmatic approach that can help countries whose social structures have been weakened by drugs, whose institutions have been destabilized and whose economies have been affected. They support countries on the road to recovery.

That's why I am pleased that the Government of Canada provides an annual contribution to CICAD for many worthwhile projects. This year, Canada has raised its contribution to \$850,000 (Can) for drug abuse prevention, policing and research projects in the hemisphere. And next year, we will increase our voluntary contribution by \$300,000, or 40%, to underline our commitment to CICAD and our belief in the vital role this organization plays in the hemisphere.

CICAD initiatives supported by Canada include a major nurse training and leadership development program in Latin America, which builds on the key role nurses play in drug abuse

prevention and promotion. This program, parts of which were developed with the University of Alberta's Faculty of Nursing, is showing some very promising results.

The funding will also support a project to combat transnational drug-related gangs and violence in the Honduras and El Salvador; cross border crime forums, based on the successful Canada-U.S. model; and many other worthwhile projects.

We should be proud of the progress we are making. But, we should also be aware of the challenges before us.

The first challenge is sovereignty. How do we enhance our partnerships – which we can and must do – without compromising our independence and autonomy? Legal, social, and political institutions differ from one country to another, as do the types and prevalence of illicit drug cultivation, trafficking and abuse.

The second challenge is capacity. Each of us also has different capacities that we bring to the table and that impacts on how we work together. One-size fits-all policy or program solutions just won't work. As we move forward, we must redouble our efforts to be sensitive to the specific national realities facing each of us. We know it can be done – the MEM is proof of that.

The third challenge speaks to our legacy. How can we ensure that our projects are sustainable? Countries must take ownership of initiatives and build on local resources and experience. The assistance CICAD provides is a catalyst - a foundation from which countries can learn to help themselves.

Call it an accident of geography, or the reality of a borderless world – all of our countries have become producers, consumers and transmitters of illicit drugs. The designer and synthetic drug industry is a telling example of this.

When law enforcement operations disrupt the cocaine supply from the southern hemisphere, methamphetamine producers from the northern hemisphere can step in to replace that supply with another drug. The route is different, but the challenge is the same.

The bottom line, through our successes and our challenges, is that we have to work together.

Canada has some innovative approaches to cross-border cooperation that we can share. Our Canada-U.S. Cross-Border Crime Forum, for example, has forged new opportunities and new ways of working with each other. Although originally developed to tackle smuggling across the eastern regions of both countries, the Forum has evolved to include other types of transnational crime, such as terrorism, cyber-crime, mass marketing fraud and money laundering. We held our eighth Cross-border Crime Forum last May and every year we have had new bilateral initiatives come out of the event.

As another example of cross-border cooperation, Canada and the United States have also worked together to develop Integrated Border Enforcement Teams, or IBETs. IBETs bring together the resources and expertise of police services and other law enforcement agencies from both sides of the Canada-United States border, to address public security concerns and tackle crimes like cross-border smuggling. We now have IBETs operating at the border, coast to coast.

It is in this same spirit of innovation that we must develop our countries' respective Drug Strategies. We all share the same goal, but how we reach that goal varies depending on the range of circumstances facing each of our countries.

In Canada, we have worked to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to dealing with the drug trade – one based on the pillars of prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement. Canada's Drug Strategy focuses on substance abuse as an important health issue and seeks to reduce the demand for and the supply of illicit drugs.

We build partnerships between health and law enforcement professionals; between government and addiction agencies; between community groups and the private sector to make it all work. And we stress prevention because that is the most cost-effective method. For example, our police forces work with children in the schools on drug abuse prevention.

This balanced approach is by no means a magic formula, but it is an approach that works for us. It addresses our specific illicit drug problems by building on the strengths of our communities and our health and law enforcement sectors. We believe that by collaborating across sectors and across borders, we will make progress.

And not only do we believe in collaboration, we invest in it. Much of the funding Canada is providing to CICAD this year comes from Canada's Drug Strategy. We know that illicit drugs are a problem that none of us can solve alone. They are a problem that pays no heed to borders. So by investing in safer communities across the Americas, we are investing in safer communities at home.

CICAD is at the leading edge of multi-lateral efforts. In the spirit of innovation you will keep that edge. And in the tradition of putting ideas into action, you will continue to have an impact in the hemisphere and beyond.

Let me close by saying how proud I am, as is Canada, that Paul Kennedy, my Senior Assistant Deputy Solicitor General, is the candidate for the Chair of CICAD.

But before I leave you today, I would like to honour the outgoing Chair, Licenciado Rafael Macedo de la Concha, Attorney General of Mexico, with a very special gift. This is an official Stetson hat, worn by members of Canada's national police force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Licenciado Macedo de la Concha, thank you for your commitment and efforts on behalf of CICAD. You have been a great friend and leader to the Commission.

Thank you for your time and I wish you a very successful session and a pleasant stay in one of the great cities of the world.