

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES



INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION

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**REMARKS BY MR. JAMES MACK, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION (CICAD),
AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH REGULAR SESSION OF
CICAD
DECEMBER 7, 2004**

I am most grateful to Acting Secretary General Einaudi for his thoughtful remarks and kind introduction. His expression of continued support to CICAD during this period of far reaching OAS structural changes and financial challenges will strengthen the resolve of all of us in CICAD to redouble our efforts as well.

On a personal level, I also am especially pleased that Ambassador Einaudi could be with us this morning, because I now have had the privilege of working with him during three phases of my own career. First in the 1980s in Central America; later in the mid 1990s when he helped bring about a peaceful solution to the Peru/Ecuador border dispute; and now here at the OAS.

I am deeply honored to have been appointed as the new Executive Secretary of CICAD. I believe very strongly in the work of CICAD, and pledge to work with dedication and energy to continue the efforts of my predecessor David Beall to strengthen CICAD's well-deserved reputation as a dynamic and innovative force for good on the full scope of drug-related issues in the Americas.

My experience in Latin America and the Caribbean began 40 years ago working with *campesinos* in the mountains of central Honduras, and later as a diplomat. I have worked extensively on political, social and labor issues throughout the hemisphere, and for the last 15 years, have been very actively involved in developing and implementing anti-narcotics policy and programs in the region.

I bring a deep personal commitment to the anti-drug issue. I have seen and felt up close the devastation that drugs cause -- to families and to communities -- as well as some of the remarkable things that can be done to help people impacted by drugs recover their lives, and to help young people to avoid ever becoming involved in drugs.

While I recognize clearly that we will be facing many challenges in the coming months to keep this organization moving ahead, making very tough program choices, and adapting to ever-changing circumstances, I very much look forward to working closely with all of you as we face these challenges together.

Mr. Kennedy has spoken very eloquently about the need for CICAD to adapt itself to current priorities, and to leave aside programs that at some point seemed promising, but several years later, no longer appear to be living up to that promise.

CICAD has for a long time adopted the idea of "pilot projects": we try out a concept in a few countries to see whether it works. If the idea catches fire, then we adapt it and

pursue it in other countries. But if member states don't find the project useful to them, and are unwilling or unable to commit their own funds to supporting it, then we must and do say: enough is enough.

Mr. Kennedy spoke about the RETCOD project, which was, I think, a good attempt to set up direct cross-border communications among law enforcement officers in neighboring countries to transmit real-time information on suspicious drug activities. The primary users of REDCOD found it to be enormously valuable. However, when an evaluation was done, and CICAD asked the participating governments to help bear some of the cost of maintaining the system, that support was not forthcoming. So we had to end the project.

As your new Executive Secretary, I recognize that there is an ongoing debate among policy-makers, academics and the general public about "the best" strategy for reducing the drug problem in this hemisphere and worldwide.

I hope that the Commission can fully engage in these policy discussions in open debate. At the same time, the Commission already has indicated, in its last meeting, that prevention, as understood in its broadest sense, will figure large in whatever CICAD does. That is why an important part of the agenda for this meeting is dedicated to drug abuse prevention themes.

The CICAD Commission is recognized around the world as a leader in cohesive and collaborative regional action brought about by an honest appraisal of the facts. I look forward to hearing from all delegates as to how CICAD can best address policy issues, in addition to substance abuse prevention, issues such as strengthening national drug control commissions, alternative development, local law enforcement, treatment, information, statistics and scientific research, alternatives to jail for minor drug offenses, gangs, organized crime, money laundering, and chemical control.

CICAD and the OAS are entering a new phase in which we will be required to be creative and innovative as never before. At the beginning of next year, 2005, the Secretariat staff will engage in our own strategic planning process as part of the reorganization of the OAS. This planning process should help us improve our internal coordination among the units of the Secretariat, and provide more streamlined service to the member states.

We in the Secretariat also will be redoubling our efforts to forge stronger cooperative links with other international organizations who have an interest in drug issues, such as the UN Office for Drugs and Crime and the Inter-American Development Bank. If we optimize our cooperation with other likeminded international organizations, we can, together, provide greater assistance to the member states.

CICAD has long spoken of, and has long acted on, the concept of shared responsibility for collective action on the drug problem in the hemisphere. I want to take the concept of shared responsibility a bit further, and discuss how the Executive Secretariat and the member states can enter into even closer partnership in our collective endeavors. As Executive Secretary, it is my responsibility to raise funding for CICAD programs, and to manage our resources wisely and prudently. The OAS is facing great financial difficulties, and is contributing fewer and fewer dollars to CICAD each year. This year, the OAS contributed less than 20% of CICAD's overall budget. Eighty per cent of our

funds are provided by a few donors, both member states and some Permanent Observers such as France, Japan, Spain, Turkey and the UK, and the Inter-American Development Bank. We are very grateful for these contributions that enable CICAD to provide services to member states. However, under the concept of shared responsibility and full partnership, I believe it is essential that those member states that have not been making voluntary contributions to CICAD's external fund seriously consider doing so, even if the amount you are able to contribute is small. CICAD would be immensely strengthened by such a tangible demonstration of your support and commitment. I suggest also that shared responsibility and partnership imply that member states should share more generously in the financing of those CICAD projects that they themselves request for their countries.

I wish to say a few words about the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism. I am strongly committed to the MEM. However, I agree with Mr. Kennedy that the MEM will require some adjustments to make it an even more powerful, more manageable, and also more cost-effective tool to help improve anti-drug performance, both in individual member states and in the region as a whole. I endorse Mr. Kennedy's idea for convening the Inter-Governmental Working Group next year before the start of the MEM Fourth Round to take a good look at the MEM process itself, as well as the MEM indicators and questionnaires.

I also believe the MEM, to be credible, must provide ever more rigorous and transparent multilateral assessments of CICAD member state anti-drug performance that can withstand outside scrutiny. The MEM has no sanctions or penalties -- only the collective judgment of peers. But in my two years in the Secretariat, I have come to believe that the collective judgments contained in the MEM recommendations can prove more than enough to spur positive action by member states. Indeed MEM recommendations are often seen by countries themselves as helpful.

Thank you again for your warm welcome. I also want to emphasize that CICAD belongs to you, the member states. So in closing, I want to tell you again that I, along with our talented and dedicated CICAD Secretariat staff, are, quite literally, at your service.