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**REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENTAL EXPERT GROUP (GEG)  
OF THE MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM)  
TO THE FORTY-FIFTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE  
INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION (CICAD)**

**Report of the Governmental Experts Group (GEG)  
of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM)  
to the forty-fifth regular session of the  
Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)**

Alberto del Río, GEG General Coordinator

Washington, D.C., May 6, 2009

Members of the Commission and delegates to this forty-fifth regular session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission,

Dr. María Teresa Chadwick, Chair of CICAD,

This GEG report covers the second stage of the evaluation process: the follow-up on the recommendations assigned during the Fourth Evaluation Round, 2005–2006, of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, measuring countries' progress in compliance with each of the recommendations assigned to them in the national reports. It is important to recall that the recommendations assigned to the countries underscore the relevant points requiring attention and represent the model instrument for evaluating the countries' capacity to respond within the framework of the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere.

The GEG evaluated the progress made in the implementation of a total of 453 recommendations assigned in the Fourth Evaluation Round, broken down into the four MEM thematic areas as follows:

- I. 104 recommendations in Institutional Strengthening
- II. 94 recommendations in Demand Reduction
- III. 130 recommendations in Supply Reduction, and
- IV. 125 recommendations in Control Measures

Regarding the methodology used, the information provided by the countries in the Follow-up Questionnaire was analyzed in accordance with the evaluation criteria previously established by the GEG, taking into account the additional information provided by the countries and expanded in light of the new situations detected during the process. In addition, four working groups were organized, each comprising between eight and nine experts from various disciplines, responsible for reviewing and preparing eight or nine draft reports. Subsequently, each of these drafts underwent joint review and discussion in plenary sessions, where, if appropriate, modifications agreed on by consensus were incorporated. In this way, the reports were enhanced with various

valuable contributions from the experts, thus complying with the mandate of objectivity, multilateralism, and transparency that characterizes the MEM.

During this phase of the Fourth Round, the Group of Experts participated in the first drafting session, held in Lima, Peru, October 6 – 15, 2008, and the second drafting session, held in Washington, D.C., March 30 – April 3, 2009. In the second session, experts from 27 countries participated, including alternate experts from Argentina, Colombia, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico and Uruguay. Unfortunately, six countries did not send an expert to Washington, D.C.: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

Here we take the opportunity to again request the attention of the Commission to ensure that all countries, in particular those from the Caribbean Region, are fully participating in the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism.

During its most recent session in Washington, DC, the GEG worked with several new experts and without the presence of some whose contributions were missed. This is not the time to analyze why some countries have had difficulty sending their experts during the process, but clearly there is a reason why this is happening, and we must have a clear understanding of why in order to make the appropriate adjustments. This situation has led us to consider the need to carry out group drafting work electronically, in combination with plenary meetings during which experts will have each countries' reference documents at hand in order to complete the evaluations. To date, this has not been customary in this phase of the evaluation of the implementation of recommendations. However, the need for increasingly accurate work has led us to consider restructuring this phase for the next Evaluation Rounds.

Whenever the GEG considers revising its procedures, it does so knowing that changes must not disturb the multilateralism that is essential to the MEM. In that regard, the Fourth Evaluation Round was carried out over a period of years during which public opinion regarding the hemispheric drug conflict changed, which has produced a paradox: as can be seen in the MEM reports, countries have improved institutional frameworks and infrastructure in the basic areas that the evaluation examines, but this does not correspond with the various statistics reported daily on drug issues both in the hemisphere and throughout the world. The GEG experts are left with one certainty and concern: though we are increasingly thorough in our analysis, we are left with the question as to whether or not the mechanism—the MEM—as a technical instrument, could go further and be of more immediate use.

As a result of the work carried out over the last decade, and in accordance with the mandate issued during the forty-fourth regular session of CICAD in Santiago, Chile, the GEG prepared the final report on the “Progress of OAS Member States on the UNGASS Objectives and Goals, 1998–2008,” after taking into consideration comments from member states. The Chair of CICAD presented this document at the 52nd Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held in Vienna in March 2009.

Regarding the importance of ensuring the MEM's political presence at the OAS General Assembly forum, the IWG proposal for the Fifth Round includes the preparation of MEM reports to be presented in June 2010, 2011 and 2012. Given that the national reports from the Fifth Round will not be available until late 2010, this proposal suggests that the CICAD Commissioners also decide on the content of a report that will be drafted within the MEM framework and presented to the Assembly in 2010. To that end, the coordination of the GEG proposes that this report analyze—from a hemispheric perspective—the recommendations assigned in the Fourth Round, both by sub-region and thematically, considering the actions that remain pending as the Fifth Round starts, and the areas in which to focus and strengthen hemispheric, multilateral cooperation.

In the months that remain in the GEG's coordination period, the general and deputy general coordinator will call on the experts via e-mail to address these concerns. We will try to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the mechanism from the perspective of evaluating experts, in order to present them to the Commission. With the proposals being presented by the Inter-governmental Working Group, progress will be made in the months ahead so that the Fifth and subsequent evaluation rounds will better reflect the reality of drug control in this hemisphere. This is what our countries deserve, and it is a minimal obligation compared with the thousands of lives that are sacrificed every year in combating the drug problem, and the many that succumb to addiction, with no alternative.

Alberto del Río  
GEG General Coordinator

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