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REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS GROUP (GEG)
OF THE MULTILATERAL EVALUATION MECHANISM (MEM),
TO THE 51ST REGULAR SESSION OF THE
INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION (CICAD)
PRESENTED BY THE GENERAL COORDINATOR OF THE GEG
DAVE ALEXANDER

**Report of the Governmental Experts Group (GEG)
Of The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM),
To The 51st Regular Session Of The
Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)
Presented By the General Coordinator of the GEG
Dave Alexander**

Members of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), Distinguished Commissioners, on behalf of the Governmental Experts Group (GEG), I wish to express my thanks to you for this opportunity to brief you on the status of the Second Plenary Session, Fifth Evaluation Round of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), convened 16 to 20 April, 2012, Washington D.C. This Plenary marked the final phase of the Fifth Round.

Twenty-nine member states attended the Plenary, comprising thirty-four participants, inclusive of six Alternates. The Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Haiti, the United States of America, Uruguay and Brazil, had both Experts and Alternates in attendance.

The General Coordinator for the GEG, Mr. Carlos Muralles, Expert from Guatemala, was replaced as the country's Expert. In accordance with the MEM procedures, Mr. Dave Alexander, Deputy General Coordinator and Expert from Grenada, replaced the General Coordinator. Mrs. Alma Cecilia Escobar de Mena, Expert from El Salvador, was elected as the Deputy Coordinator.

On behalf of the Experts, I wish to place on record, our appreciation for the excellent work done by Mr. Muralles, at the GEG, and his leadership as General Coordinator.

The Second Plenary reviewed the status of implementation of 350 recommendations. Based on consensus, 101 recommendations were deemed to be fulfilled, while, implementation of 115 was in progress and 105 had not been started; 23 recommendations assigned to 17 member states were withdrawn, based on the pertinent analysis of the GEG. It should be noted that this is the first time in the MEM process that some recommendations were withdrawn. The withdrawal of the recommendations was a product of the evaluative process. This decision was taken after considerable discussions and thorough examination of the circumstances which warranted such action.

There were several positive developments which contributed to the successful implementation of the Plenary Session, *inter alia*:

- i. Significant assistance provided by MEM Unit, headed by Angela Crowdy, both prior to and during the Plenary, contributed immensely to the Experts completing reviews of reports of all member states. This included circulation on-line of all the country comments, updated data and working group reports in both working languages of the MEM.
- ii. Satisfactory preparatory work by the working groups to the commencement of the Plenary redounded to the efficient execution of the Session. This included analysis of country comments, evaluation of new data and preparation of final drafts and conclusions, online circulation and reviews of information provided by member states and redrafted texts among working groups.
- iii. Significant preparation done by the MEM Unit before the Plenary reduced the time required for the meeting, hence reducing costs.

- iv. The innovative and creative approach used by the MEM with regards to the MEM Unit providing comments sent by countries (in both English and Spanish) on a jump drive for reference during Plenary helped the GEG during the review of each report and in refining the text.
- v. Sterling leadership by the Coordinators of the four working groups, which were assigned various country reports to review.
- vi. GEG volunteered to assist in the preparation of the reports which were assigned to Experts who were unable to complete their reports due to unforeseen circumstances.
- vii. All the documents and translations were translated on time and sent by the MEM Unit to the GEG in a timely manner.

However, there were some challenges which emerged prior to, and during the Plenary. These challenges included:

- i. Five member states did not attend the Plenary; this resulted in additional work for some Experts who graciously assisted in preparation of reports which were assigned to the Experts of the countries which did not participate.
- ii. Frequent changes in the designation of some Experts by their countries, created some delays in drafting of some reports.
- iii. Some member states provided little, and in one case, no information, in response to notes sent to the countries by the GEG, at the end of the First Plenary Session in 2011. This unfortunate situation made it difficult for the Experts to evaluate those countries in an effective manner.

The GEG reaffirms its unequivocal support of the MEM, its ideals and aspirations. We are confident that the working methodology of the MEM would continue to develop and thereby strengthen the regions responses to the drug phenomenon. Our countries have endorsed this process. We are confident that your continued support of the MEM, and the continued commitment of all member states would redound significantly to the success of this process. The technical and political support of this process is paramount.

Many lessons have been learnt in the implementation of the MEM. These lessons have enriched the process, provided the Experts with greater understanding of the process and technical skills to prepare the various country reports. We are confident that as we work together in the multilateral process, the MEM would continue to be strengthened.

It has also provided a platform for dialogue with the Inter-Governmental Working Group (IWG), as we enter the Sixth Round of the MEM. The collective experiences of the Experts as they drafted the country reports, give them the opportunity to share their knowledge of the working methodology of the MEM, with members of the IWG, who are tasked with the responsibility to prepare the new MEM evaluation instrument and other procedural matters for the Sixth Evaluation Round.

On behalf of the GEG, I wish to commend Ambassador Paul Simons and the entire staff at CICAD for the fullest support provided to the GEG in the implementation of the Second Plenary Session. Our highest regards and appreciation are extended to Angela Crowdy and the MEM Unit, for their diligent, timely and

efficient work at the MEM Unit. We indeed acknowledge your endeavors, which redounded to the successful and timely conclusion of the Second Plenary Session.

Thank You.