

**ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
Inter-American Committee on Ports**

(CIDI/CIP/doc. 133/03)

**PROPOSAL**

**HEMISPHERIC CONFERENCE ON PORT SECURITY**

***I. Introduction and justification:***

Ninety percent of international trade of the Americas is done by water, being the maritime port industry one of the most relevant and most regionally influencing activities, in terms of gross national product, investments, and generation of employment, among others. For the Caribbean countries these figures are even higher. Port systems must dispose of infrastructures, equipment, facilities and modern services that enable the promotion of higher levels of efficiency and competence, both nationally and regionally. Besides being efficient, ports must also be secure.

The countries of the hemisphere will consolidate the Free Trade Area of the Americas, from year 2005 onwards. The FTAA is one of the most important processes of regional integration that has been developed in the last decade and will constitute the largest free trade zone in the world, extending from Canada to Chile, engulfing all of the Caribbean, and representing more than 800 million people. This Area will increase the hemispheric trade and consequently, port functions and labor. The United States is one of the most important commercial partners to the majority, if not all, of the countries in the region; therefore, bilateral commerce with this country will also rise as a consequence of tariff reductions, generating an increased level of activity in ports of Latin America and the Caribbean. In a similar manner the diverse schemes of sub-regional integration, that is, the Andean, South Cone, Central American, Caribbean and North American common markets, will all converge in the process of tariff reductions in order to achieve an extended hemispheric market, in the year 2005.

Simultaneously, the United States has adopted strict measures for securing commercial traffic, and the movement of people and services, as a consequence of the terrorist acts of 2001. Among these measures the "Act on Security for Maritime Transport, 2002" is of particular importance. Its basic objective is to increase the vigilance at each port of the United States, as well as in all of the vessels destined for these ports, guaranteeing better national security. Specifically, the Secretary of Transport of this country will hold assessments on the vulnerability to terrorism of those foreign ports from which vessels depart, headed for the United States. He can also evaluate the conditions of any other port, which, in his opinion, could pose a serious terrorist threat. This assessment includes the study on cargo control and container equipment, security measures to restrict vessel access, cargo and dock zones; security on board; authorization/certification testifying accomplishment of security norms; management programs on security matters, and other appropriate measures to prevent terrorist acts against the United States. In case the evaluation should reveal that a port does not comply with certain necessary security measures, it will be given a margin of ninety days to carry out the corrective measures. If this does not occur, the Government of the United States can take the decision of restricting the entrance of any vessel or merchandise from that port.

Another security norm adopted by the United States is the Container Security Initiative (CSI) officially launched on January 2002, and by which the Customs Service is able to substantially improve its abilities in detecting arms of mass destruction, drugs, and other dangerous products or materials transported illicitly by sea. The CSI includes the presence of

custom officials of the United States in foreign ports throughout the world, in order to enable high-risk container control, destined for the United States, even before they depart from their ports of origin. Currently, bilateral agreements are being signed in order to activate this mechanism that already is working in approximately twenty of the most important ports in the world.

In a related event, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) of the United Nations held a Diplomatic Conference on December 2002 in order to reinforce maritime security, and prevent and suppress acts of terrorism against shipping. On this occasion, several amendments were adopted to the 1974 International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), aimed at enhancing maritime security on board ships and at ship/port interface areas. The most far-reaching amendment enshrines the new International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code). The Code contains detailed security-related requirements for Governments, port authorities, and shipping companies in a mandatory section (Part A), together with a series of guidelines about how to meet these requirements in a second, non-mandatory section (Part B). Essentially, the Code takes the approach that ensuring the security of ships and port facilities is basically a risk management activity and that to determine what security measures are appropriate, an assessment of the risks must be made in each particular case. The purpose of the Code is to provide a standardized, consistent framework for evaluating risk, enabling governments to offset changes in threat with changes in vulnerability for ships and port facilities. The Conference also adopted a series of resolutions designed to add weight to the amendments, encouraging the application of the measures to ships and port facilities not covered by the Code and paving the way for future work on the subject. Most of these measures are to be enforced by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004.

The Inter-American Committee on Ports (CIP) of the Organization of American States (OAS) is the only Inter-American inter-governmental forum that works on port development of member countries with the active participation of the private sector. Port security and safety is one of the substantial issues that it regularly deals with; therefore, the Secretariat has at its disposition information and knowledge on the international techniques currently in use, as well as specialists. Port security is especially relevant in the agenda of the CIP, having created a Technical Advisory Group specialized on the issue and chaired by the delegation of the United States (US MARAD). The Secretariat of the CIP has broad experience in project management for it acts as a specialized agency in the development of cooperation projects that benefit the ports of the hemisphere and are financed by external resources.

The ports of the hemisphere must urgently comply with the new regulations and international standards of security and safety in order to obtain the maximum benefits from the extended market that the FTAA offers. They must also continue to offer their services in an efficient and secure manner, to minimize risk and to be able to surpass the vulnerabilities that could be faced in terms of terrorism, illicit drug traffic, thefts, intruders, control of hazardous cargo, and environmental protection, among others.

For these reasons, an Inter American Port Security Conference to be held before the deadline of July 1st, 2004 will give all ports of the OAS member countries the opportunity to know where they are standing in terms of security, to obtain further and advanced information, to procure alternative security policies and enhanced mechanisms and to receive assistance for their implementation. The Conference will launch a hemispheric security cooperation plan that will assist the necessary ports in complying with the new regulations and standards. The plan, based on an Alliance of participating port operators and other members of the private initiative, port authorities, government institutions and agencies and international organizations, would be beneficial to all parties.

## **II. Objectives:**

- (a) Exchange information on the state of port security in the Americas; enhancement projects and perspectives.
- (b) Identify strategies and mechanisms for the improvement of port security facilities.
- (c) Launch an Inter-American Port Security Plan for assisting needed port from the Americas in complying with new regulations and international standards, based on a public-private sector alliance.

**III. Place and date:**

Florida, (city to be decided) USA, 3 days at the end of the winter 2004.

**IV. Organized by:**

The Conference will be organized by OAS, through its inter-American Committee on Ports (CIP).

**V. Advisory Group:**

This group will advise CIP particularly in achieving the following objectives: (a) to enhance the terms of the Conference -including the host city, (b) to gain political support from the US and other countries for the Conference, (c) to obtain the required financial resources for the Conference, (d) to provide technical and institutional support for facilitating the Conference, (e) to endorse and procure financing for the execution of the Inter-American Port Security Cooperation Plan particularly the Alliance among ports of the Americas, and (f) to promote the Conference worldwide. The secretariat will identify institutions and agencies that will be invited to integrate the group.

**VI. Supporting institutions:**

Participating public and private institutions, agencies and firms that will collaborate in providing the CIP with technical, institutional and financial inputs.

**VII. Secretariat:**

The CIP Secretariat will be the executing agency of the Conference project, as well as the Secretariat of the Conference.

**VIII. Participants:**

The participants to the Conference will be: (a) representatives from OAS member countries, (b) representatives from Permanent Observer countries to the OAS, (c) representatives from international and regional organizations and (d) private sector port operators and special guests. A total of 200 participants are estimated to attend the Conference. The expected participants are:

Representatives of OAS member and observer countries: Ministers, Ambassadors, undersecretaries, chairman of port authorities institutions, and other high-level government officials.

Representatives of international/regional organizations: Managers, directors and senior officials.

Special guests: Experts on port security and high-level industry executives.

**IX. Convocation and invitations:**

OAS (through CIP) will convoke the Conference. The mayor of the host city will extend the invitations. All participants must be accredited by their institutions before the Conference opening.

**X. Languages:**

The Conference will be held in English and Spanish, with simultaneous interpretation provided.

**XI. Conference development:**

The Conference will have a Chairperson, and two vice chairs recommended by the Advisory Group. The Chairperson will be responsible for conducting the plenary sessions and insuring that the Conference objectives are achieved. The vice chairs will replace the chair in his/her absence. The opening and closing sessions will be organized by the Secretariat. Speakers will give their presentations one after the other, and at the end of each panel a dialogue will be opened. The Secretariat will produce the final report including the conclusions and recommendations of the Conference.

**XII. On the presentations:**

Thirty-six presentations will be given by speakers representing: (a) National or regional port authority from an OAS member countries; (b) Port directors or port operators from main port of OAS member countries, and (c) experts from international organizations. The Secretariat, based on the advisory group recommendations, will schedule the program of the four plenary sessions. Ideally there should be a presentation from each OAS country (thirty-four). In addition there will be two presentations from international organizations (IMO and CIP/OAS). All presentations must be no longer than twenty minutes.

**XIII. On the Inter American Port Security Cooperation Plan:**

An Inter-American Port Security Cooperation Plan, (elaborated by CIP and presented at the First Plenary Session) will be launched to assist most needed ports from the OAS member countries in their efforts to comply with the new regulations and international standards on port security. The Plan foresees an integrated participation of government and private initiatives to achieve the following components: (a) Training; (b) Technical assistance for the implementation of an Inter-American Port Security Alliance; (c) Information center; and (d) E-ports, a web page. IACD will contribute with basic financing for the Plan, but further resources are to be explored.

**XIV. Conference Product:**

A final report will be produced by the Secretariat that must include the main conclusions and recommendations presented by speakers and experts at the Conference. It will be distributed to all participants, OAS member countries and CIP representatives.

**XV. Budget:**

If the project is to cover every expense, the budget is approximately less than US \$ 300,000.

**XVI. Financing:**

To be explored. Some alternatives for financing are: (a) Contributions from supporting institutions. (b) Fees applied to special guests. (c) Selling of advertising (banners, logos, etc.) (d) Exhibition hall for products and services.

Carlos M. Gallegos  
Executive Secretary  
Inter American Committee on Ports  
Organization of American States  
1889 F St., NW. Washington D.C. 20006  
Tel: (202) 458-3871  
Fax: (202) 458-3517  
E-mail: [cgallegos@oas.org](mailto:cgallegos@oas.org)

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