

Sixth Regular Session of CICTE Executive Secretary's Report

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The CICTE program of technical assistance and specialized training reached maturity in 2005. Together with more than 20 partner organizations, both within the OAS and without, we have substantially increased the volume of our programs, while moving into new areas of our Work Plan. We have worked closely with our partners to improve the quality of each training program, modifying course content and instructors, based on on-site observation by the CICTE staff, and feedback from Member States. At the same time, more Member States, Observers, and International Organizations are contributing staff, funding, and logistical support to the program.

Equally, our legislative assistance and consultation service, run jointly with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, has continued to provide practical advice to Member States engaged in revising their counter-terrorism and anti-terrorist financing legislation, to bring their laws into conformity with the international treaty obligations and the requirements of UN Security Council Resolutions. This has become especially significant as more and more Member States (five this past year) ratify both the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism and the UN Counter-Terrorism conventions on which it is based. As of today, 17 Member States have ratified the Inter-American Convention and 16 have ratified the twelve international counter terrorism conventions. The thirteenth convention, regarding nuclear terrorism, was opened for signature in September.

I have written to each mission individually reporting on what services we have provided to you this past year. I want now to give you a broader picture of each of these programs and what we have tried to accomplish with them.

Port Security

This remains our largest program. Last year, working with the US Maritime Administration, the International Maritime Organization and World Maritime University we provided training for 158 port security officers from 30 Member States on implementing the ISPS Code on port security. As more and more Member States were able to certify that they are in compliance with the code, we included new courses for port security trainers, and more specialized training on container inspections. Member State ports ship 600,000 containers yearly just to the US, and we consider improving container security an essential element in maintaining the safe and efficient flow of trade. In addition, we began a program of individualized, in-depth port security assessments for four national port systems, and followed up with specific recommendations and individualized training for each. This year we will begin a series of follow-up visits to determine the effectiveness of this training.

Airport Security

The airport security program parallels the port security program. Developing a Memorandum of Understanding with a contracting agency took longer to resolve than we had anticipated.

Nevertheless, in cooperation with the International Civil Aviation Organization and the US Transportation Security Administration, we provided training for 81 airport security officials from 24 Member States on key aspects of the ICAO security standards.

We also supported an ICAO workshop designed to improve Member State ability to implement new 2006 Hold Baggage Screen (HBS) requirements. CICTE's assistance allowed more than 21 states that would have otherwise been unable to participate to attend the workshop.

Customs and Border Security

Member States have increasingly recognized that strengthening customs and border control systems is an essential step, not only to curb the movement of terrorists and dangerous materials, but to improve their ability to deal with contraband of all types, as well as potential human traffickers. Close cooperation between customs, immigration, and police officials is essential to efficient border management, and, with this in mind, in collaboration with the International Organization on Migration, we have begun a series of comprehensive border management studies, conducting five in 2005. These studies provide Member States with detailed recommendations for improving their border management systems. On the same basis, we provided training for 121 customs and other law enforcement officials from 18 Member States on means to develop and manage professional integrity programs.

Finally, in a joint CICTE-CICAD-CCLEC workshop we trained 17 CARICOM and two Haitian customs and law enforcement officials on container and passenger targeting. The US Department of Homeland Security provided key support to this event including trainers and access to the facilities at Port Everglades for hands on training. All these programs help Member States develop a common operational doctrine and improve cooperation.

Legislation and Legal Assistance

Our legislative and legal assistance service has developed a distinctive and effective approach to helping Member States reconcile the complex issues involved in implementing a host of international agreements and national legislation. Beginning with sub-regional meetings to acquaint Member State governments with the legal requirements and implications of these conventions, we then offer workshops to individual Member States to review current and pending legislation. As a final step, we conduct specialized training for legal officials such as prosecutors on technical procedures related to the Conventions. Last year, we conducted one sub-regional meeting on counter-terrorism legislation for six Eastern Caribbean states, six national workshops on counter-terrorism legislation, and two sub-regional training programs for prosecutors on mutual legal assistance in terrorism-related cases. In all of these programs, we work closely with other interested bodies such as CICAD, within the OAS family, and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, our principal partner in these programs. In 2006 we will expand this program in cooperation with a new partner, the Government of Spain.

Cyber-Security

In cooperation with the Government of Brazil, we held the Second Meeting of Government Experts on Cyber-security in Sao Paulo last September. This meeting finalized plans for implementing a cyber- security alert network for the Americas. In the next few weeks we will begin implementing this plan, first by bringing online a network of operating national CSIRTs in the Member States, then by providing training to Member State CSIRT operators as they are identified. I urge Member States that have not already done so to designate their national CSIRT contacts as quickly as possible, to bring this important project to fruition.

Other Initiatives

Helping Member States in the Caribbean prepare for the 2007 Cricket World Cup remains a high priority for the Secretariat. In addition to the port, airport and border control initiatives described above, which provided training for 141 officials from the English-speaking Caribbean, we conducted two special training programs directly related to the event. Working in conjunction with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) we provided special training on hostage negotiation to 38 law enforcement officials from 12 Caribbean states. We followed this course with our second annual counter-terrorism policy exercise. This year's scenario was based on a hostage-taking incident at a sporting event, and took place in Jamaica.

This year, an increasing number of Member States proposed and developed programs to support the CICTE Work Plan. In cooperation with the Government of Trinidad & Tobago, we held our first counter-terrorism intelligence seminar for Caribbean security executives. Participants from the Caribbean, Argentina, and Colombia provided briefings on potential problems in the region, and discussed means of exchanging useful information. Argentina will follow up this year with a course for intelligence professionals.

The Government of Argentina also held a regional workshop on legal assistance and cooperation on counterterrorism and the prevention of terrorist financing for 65 government officials from 11 Member States. Participants discussed the ways of improving legal cooperation among judges, prosecutors and judicial police. In addition, the Secretariat supported Colombia's Financial Intelligence Unit participation in the FATF Typologies Exercise to add perspective to discussion on emerging trends in terrorist financing. CICTE has FATF Observer status.

In response to suggestions that we improve our outreach, we have begun to develop a regional network of security-related think tanks as a basis for information-sharing and outreach programs. We have so far identified and contacted over 80 such groups, and added them to the mailing list for the *Informe*. We believe that establishing a dialogue with interested, serious academic and professional groups is essential to cultivating a hemispheric culture of security, and look on this as a first step. In addition, we completely revamped our web page, resulting in a substantial increase in visitors and downloads.

Other regional organizations and the UN system continue to look to CICTE as a model for developing counter-terrorism programs. Early last year I spoke to the UNCTC-sponsored IV Meeting of International and Regional Organizations on ways to improve international cooperation on counter-terrorism programs. In November, I briefed the CTC Member States directly at UN Headquarters. The CTC Chair has asked us informally if we would mentor officials of other regional organizations by hosting them as observers at the CICTE Secretariat. I also met with officials of the OSCE, SECI, and CIS on means to improve coordination.

This year we expect to see several initiatives long in the planning stage come to fruition. A special syllabus on terrorist financing developed in conjunction with CICAD and regional subject matter experts will be ready soon and we hope to use it as the basis for training in this area, and to also complement the training on money laundering that is being offered not only by CICAD but by other international organizations like the IMF and the IDB. A new project on the security of travel documents is ready and the first training program will be announced shortly.

In cooperation with the Government of Trinidad & Tobago, we will begin training under the Inter-American Tourism and Receptions Security Initiative (ITRS) in the next few weeks. Our objective is to have the system of standards and operating procedures active in at least five pilot countries prior to the Cricket World Cup. When this program is fully implemented, Member States will be more capable of providing a safe and secure environment for visitors at hotels and other types of accommodation and recreational facilities. ITRS will make it possible for all security personnel to receive an internationally accepted standard of specialized security training to function effectively at various levels in the industry, provide building standards that meet local regional and internationally accepted standards, and provide a mechanism to ensure that well established best security practices are observed. This initiative will not only bolster global competitiveness of many tourism-based economies, but provide these countries with the lasting capabilities to prevent, deter, and minimize the possibilities of terrorist attacks beyond Cricket World Cup 2007.

I am especially pleased to report that we have found a major new partner for our programs. The Government of Spain will organize and co-sponsor a series of projects for prosecutors and judges relating to terrorist prosecutions, and for other security officials on other themes. The first of these cooperative projects, a workshop on new strategies for port security will take place in Cartagena, Colombia next week. Our first joint legal program is scheduled for early May.

This year will also see a new emphasis on evaluating the effectiveness of our program. In the last two years, CICTE has provided training to nearly 1,000 Member State security officials. If we are to maintain this pace, we need to objectively assess what impact this training makes. To what extent can we document that our ports, airports, border crossings, financial systems are actually safer as a result of this training? We have already begun to build testing sequences into our programs. These are not tests of student performance – they will be anonymous. But by testing participants before a course begins, and again at the end, we will be able to assess the effectiveness of the instruction.

In addition, we plan more systematic follow-ups by the CICTE staff, and possibly, a program for senior managers on how to develop and implement their own measures of performance.

Coordination and communication continue to require consistent effort. The challenge of reconciling CICTE projects with comparable initiatives by other organizations and governments has not become easier, and as the program has grown, the potential for duplication and confusion has grown with it. We must avoid duplication, but donors and Member States need to advise us of their plans and projects while they are still in the planning stages. We must rely on our National Points of Contact for this information; in those cases in which the contacts are active, communication is easy and our ability to help Member States is enhanced. Where Points of Contact do not maintain direct contact with the Secretariat, problems have arisen.

Administrative changes within the Organization also have important implications for the Secretariat. CICTE still receives less than 5% of its budget from the regular fund. Secondments of staff from Member States Mexico, Trinidad & Tobago, and Uruguay, as well as the Inter-American Defense Board, and this year including new arrivals from Brazil and Colombia develop and manage the program. Without them there would be no CICTE. But we cannot run on this basis forever. CICTE must be funded and staffed in the same way as the other technical bodies of the Organization. We recognize that this cannot be done immediately, given the Organization's current financial situation. However, we want to set as a goal support from the Regular Fund to match at least 25% of the amount we receive from donated funds, and we appeal to you to help us reach this goal over the next two years.

When we began this journey on the terrible day of September 11, 2001, CICTE had not met for two years, there was no budget, no Secretariat, no program. If you tried to call CICTE, there was no one to answer the phone – and there was no phone.

As a result of your determination and support, our ports and airports are safer, our financial systems more resistant to abuse by terrorist supporters, our laws more reflective of the worldwide consensus on how to deal with terrorist threats. Yet much remains to be done. It is still too easy to cross many of our borders with false or stolen travel documents. Terrorists have come to rely more and more on the informal banking network to transfer funds from place to place. In many countries, critical infrastructure, including tourism sites so critical to national economies remains vulnerable. The goals of our program are to help Member States make potential targets in our region less attractive, make financial and logistical support for terrorist groups more risky, and so make an actual attack less likely. By doing so, we can play our role in the broader international efforts against terrorism, and keep our citizens safe as they go about the business of building democratic, just, and prosperous societies.