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REPORT ON THE FIFTH MEETING OF NATIONAL POINTS OF CONTACT FOR CICTE

(Presented by the Chair of the Fifth Meeting,
Dr. Carol Fuller, Secretary of CICTE,
at the fourth plenary session, held on March 2, 2007)

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The CICTE National Points of Contact held their fifth annual meeting on February 28th before the Opening Session of the Seventh Regular Session of CICTE. I am pleased to report that there are now National Points of Contact (NPCs) in all but two CICTE Member States, and we are expecting someone to be identified in the near future in one of those two. A majority of the NPCs were able to attend this fifth annual meeting.

This meeting offered the opportunity to present the OAS Assistant Secretary for Multidimensional Security, Ambassador Alexandre Addor-Neto, newly appointed by the Secretary General in January of 2007. Ambassador Addor-Neto explained the reorganization within the OAS in the last two years to create the new Secretariat with three interrelated departments: CICTE, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and, since March of 2006, the Department of Public Security. The three departments are coordinating closely under the direction of Ambassador Addor-Neto –to the great advantage of OAS Member States. This meeting was also the first opportunity for me, as the new Secretary of CICTE, to meet with our NPCs. In addition, it was an opportunity to introduce Ms. Gillian Bristol, newly appointed as the Liaison for the NPC network in the CICTE Secretariat, who is working hard to update our contact list and enter into a good exchange through electronic communication with our NPCs.

Since this was the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the NPC network, our meeting focused on ways to improve the NPC system. The Secretariat received many ideas from participants on how to improve flow of information between the Secretariat and NPCs and among the NPCs themselves. The Secretariat has already expanded the website and changed the format of our monthly report sent to all NPCs and posted on the website and will try to implement some of the additional recommendations made at the meeting. Similarly, there were many suggestions about ways to share information on technical areas of CICTE work and the CICTE Work Plan.

Mr. Chairman, the Secretariat was pleased to hear from the NPCs that they believe the network is a useful tool for the Member States and that they would like to increase the flow of information. We were also pleased at the suggestions made by the NPCs and their interest in working closely with the Secretariat in the future to share counter-terrorism developments in their respective countries and assist in the coordination of capacity-building events. This coordination function is critical to the success of the Secretariat's training programs in the Hemisphere.

The CICTE network of NPCs is unique. In fact, other organizations have asked the Secretariat to share more of their information with our network so that we can enhance international coordination between organizations and with other regions of the world. We look forward to improving the system and supporting the Member States and you, as Chair of the Committee, in the coming year.

Thank you.