

INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM (CICTE)

EIGHTH REGULAR SESSION
March 5 - 7, 2008
Washington, D. C., United States

OEA/Ser. L.X.2.8
CICTE/INF. 1/08
5 March 2008
Original: Spanish

REMARKS BY THE CHAIR OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE
AGAINST TERRORISM, HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR ARISTIDES ROYO,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PANAMÁ
TO THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

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Mr. Minister of Defense of Peru, Antero Flores Aráoz;
Mr. Secretary General, José Miguel Insulza;
Your Excellencies, permanent representatives of the member states to the OAS;
Distinguished representative of the permanent observers to the OAS;
Distinguished national points of contact of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism;
Dr. Carol Fuller, Secretary of CICTE;
Special guests;
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to inaugurate this Eighth Regular Session of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism on behalf of my country, Panama, in its capacity as Chair of this august committee.

The fight against terrorism is clearly an effort and a commitment that can only be undertaken in the context of broad, transparent multilateral cooperation. The Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) is the ideal setting and forum for addressing that challenge—an effort that it has been involved in since its establishment in 1999 and that it has tackled with renewed dedication and fervor since 2001. These initiatives owe their success and progress to the fact that the Committee's 34 member states—sovereign nations of all the Americas—stand firm in their commitment to cooperate and work together in action to prevent, combat, and eliminate terrorism.

It is an extremely grave responsibility, which has been taken on voluntarily by all member states of the Committee, whose dedication is apparent in the increased capacity of their corresponding authorities and officials to confront the threat of terrorism on their borders and in their ports, airports, and financial systems, and to counter that threat with adequate laws to punish terrorist acts. Moreover, during this Eighth Regular Session, the member states will pledge to continue strengthening the initiatives adopted by CICTE and to promote programs for their implementation, by adopting a political declaration and a work plan that provide for immediate and long-term activities.

On February 28, 2007, the date on which Panama assumed the Chair of CICTE, we expressed our conviction that the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism would continue to develop as a platform for pluralistic understanding that must, among other purposes, “build mutual international confidence and credibility in order to effectively meet the challenges of terrorism...” At that time we received the mandate as Chair on the understanding that the community of nations of the inter-American system supported and shared the view that CICTE was an exceptionally valuable tool for confronting new, asymmetrical threats to our national security and the security of our partners in the global community. One year later, Panama can reaffirm this understanding with pride and satisfaction.

This cooperation within the Organization of American States and with the international community must be close and ongoing, for the security, benefit, and well-being of the peoples of the Americas.

Distinguished delegates: On behalf of the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Martín Torrijos, my deepest thanks to you for the trust you have placed in us to serve as Chair of the Committee during this term. Welcome to this Eighth Regular Session, which I now declare open.

Thank you very much.