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COMMITTEE ON HEMISPHERIC SECURITY

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First Meeting of the Technical Group
on Transnational Organized Crime
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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL GROUP
ON TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

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The Technical Group on Transnational Organized Crime met for the first time in Mexico City on July 26 and 27, 2007. The Technical Group was established in accordance with Permanent Council Resolution 908 (1567/06), through which the Hemispheric Plan of Action against Transnational Organized Crime was adopted.

As a result of the dialogue carried out over the course of the 2-day meeting, and in order for the General Secretariat to collaborate in the development of a Work Program for the Technical Group, the following conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Considering the importance Member States give to combating transnational organized crime, and due to the need to strengthen international cooperation as a tool to address the threat that this phenomenon represents, Delegations identified priority issues for cooperation, as well as initial actions to be taken in this regard, within the general framework outlined in the Plan of Action. These priority areas include the use of information networks, institutional capacity-building, legislation, and building confidence between responsible authorities in the Member States.
2. Delegations agreed that the areas of technical cooperation and other actions be pragmatic in nature, and that they take into consideration the particular needs and characteristics of each Member State, striving to avoid duplication of efforts and actions undertaken by the OAS and other international organizations. Member States agreed to provide the General Secretariat with information regarding their technical assistance capacities, as well as their needs.
3. Considering the vulnerability of Caribbean states, due to their geographic location and shortage of resources, said states should receive special consideration for cooperation and training.
4. It was further acknowledged that the OAS should continue to maintain and develop relations with other international organizations, such as the United Nations, in its efforts to combat transnational organized crime. In addition, actions within the OAS should complement existing bilateral and subregional cooperation mechanisms of the Member States.

RECOMMENDATIONS

a) Review of Implementation and Furthering Cooperation

1. The Technical Group should consider the progress made in implementing the Hemispheric Plan of Action as well as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its three protocols, at the national, regional and subregional levels, including:

Law enforcement matters:

- i) Criminalization of those activities contained in the United Nations Convention and its three Protocols;
- ii) Investigation, including special investigative techniques and witness protection;
- iii) Prosecution and international cooperation and assistance.

b) Capacity Building

1. An assessment must be made of the needs and capacities of Member States in regards to transnational organized crime.
2. In this regard, the Technical Group requests the General Secretariat, through its Department of Public Security, to prepare an assessment of the needs of Member States in regards to technical cooperation for combating transnational organized crime, taking into account the respective national circumstances.
3. In the same fashion, and from the supply side, the Technical Group requests the General Secretariat to prepare an inventory and a report of the effectiveness and results obtained by technical cooperation modules, including courses, workshops and/or seminars that are offered by OAS Member States, subregional organizations and the UN system, especially the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as well as INTERPOL, which could be included in an OAS toolkit for the benefit of those Member States requiring technical assistance.
4. Current efforts by the OAS Department of Public Security, other OAS bodies (as envisioned in the Hemispheric Plan of Action) and the UNODC, as well as other international organizations, should be taken into account in order to benefit from synergies and to avoid duplication of efforts.

c) Information sharing

1. Member states should enrich and strengthen the exchange of useful information for combating transnational organized crime between competent authorities identified by the Member States. This should be done by using, to the extent feasible and appropriate, existing channels of communication and networks with a view to working towards a more adequate network for the purposes pursued by the competent authorities. In addition, the Technical Group should consider how to further the implementation of paragraph 5 c), of section II of the Hemispheric Plan of Action at its next meeting.
2. Member states will inform the General Secretariat as quickly as possible of their competent authorities responsible for combating transnational organized crime.
3. Member states should promote discussion of the trends, challenges and new and emerging issues posed by transnational organized crime in the Hemisphere.

d) Follow-Up

1. The General Secretariat is requested, based on information available in the various bodies of the OAS and other international organizations, to draft an assessment of the status of implementation by the Member States of the region of the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its three Protocols. Those Member States that have not yet done so are respectfully requested to submit a completed UNODC Questionnaire on Implementation of the UNTOC.
2. In order to give continuity to the work of the Technical Group, it recommends to the Committee on Hemispheric Security that the next meeting of the Technical Group preferably be held within 6 months time to agree on activities and programs that further the implementation of the Hemispheric Plan of Action.
3. As a follow-up to the First Meeting of the Technical Group against Transnational Organized Crime, the General Secretariat, in collaboration with the Chair, will prepare a draft agenda and draft Work Program for the Technical Group, which will be considered during the second meeting of this Group. In accordance with the Hemispheric Plan of Action, the Permanent Council will subsequently consider the Work Program of the Technical Group, prior to its implementation.
4. Member States who have not yet done so are requested to provide the names of their designated National Points of Contact to the Technical Group as quickly as possible.