

QUINTA REUNIÓN DE MINISTROS DE JUSTICIA
O DE MINISTROS O PROCURADORES GENERALES
DE LAS AMÉRICAS
28 al 30 de abril de 2004
Washington, D.C.

OEA/Ser.K/XXXIV.5
REMJA-V/INF.08/04
30 abril 2004
Original: Textual

INTERVENTION BY AMBASSADOR LUIGI R. EINAUDI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
GENERAL, GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN
STATES

CLOSING SESSION, FIFTH MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF JUSTICE OR OF
MINISTERS OR ATTORNEYS GENERAL OF THE AMERICAS (REMJA-V)
Washington, D.C., APRIL 30, 2004

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SECRETARY GENERAL, GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE
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**CLOSING SESSION, FIFTH MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF
JUSTICE OR OF MINISTERS OR ATTORNEYS GENERAL OF THE
AMERICAS (REMJA-V)
Washington, D.C., APRIL 30, 2004**

The Honorable Rafael Macedo de la Concha, Attorney General of Mexico,
Esteemed Ministers of Justice and Attorneys General,
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Representatives of
international and regional organizations, Delegates, Ladies and
Gentlemen,

It is a genuine pleasure for me to join you for this closing session of the
Fifth Meeting of the Ministers of Justice or of Ministers or Attorneys
General of the Americas.

Your meeting embodies the three key elements that make possible
improved regional cooperation:

First, you all represent governments, but not just governments: you
personally represent the highest aspirations of good government in your
respective countries: the rule of law as the foundation of civilized
progress;

Second, we of the OAS are an organization of governments, and at our
best we are charged with the negotiation of the international treaties and
conventions that define the cooperation among our individual sovereign
states; and

Third and finally, you and we meet here within the framework of the Summits of the Americas, which, because it is headed by our presidents and heads of governments, is the best avenue for organizing the government-wide, domestic follow up that will ensure that the agreements we reach will not remain words without meaning for the citizens of our countries.

Distinguished Ministers of Justice and Attorneys General

Lawlessness thrives on weak public institutions.

With a strong push from Secretary General Gaviria, REMJA has given us a new forum, and tool, to address the scourge of transnational organized crime and terrorism. With enhanced mutual legal and judicial international cooperation, we can reduce the ability of criminals to operate with impunity, and help our citizens in their battle for safety, dignity and well-being in their homes and communities.

In this regard I welcome the presence throughout this meeting of Professor Bernard Gousse, Minister of Justice of Haiti which is going through so much travail. I hope that his participation is a sign of the interim government's dedication to the restoration of the rule of law and of justice for all citizens of that tragic land.

I would like to stress the importance of promoting and implementing the recommendations adopted here, both in the technical work done in the REMJA framework and in the upcoming OAS General Assembly and after that the next Summit in Argentina in 2005.

Three of the excellent draft conclusions and recommendations touch particularly on work in which my Office is involved.

The first regards the importance of ratifying and or acceding to CIFTA, the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Material. Illegal armed gangs have become enough of a problem in enough nations that the other side of the coin, disarmament, is now a regional and certainly sub-regional problem. On May 12-13, with the government of Nicaragua as host, and with the support of Brazil, Canada and the United States, the OAS will be holding a seminar to address the growing problem Central American and Caribbean regional organizations will be involved. CIFTA is a critical component of out needed response.

Second, Corruption. At the request of the government of Ecuador, this will be the central theme of the private meetings of the OAS General Assembly in Quito in June, to which your recommendations are addressed.

Third, trafficking in persons. I understand this is the first time trafficking, which is such a blight for so many women and children, is recognized as an issue of permanent concern on the agenda of REMJA.

To close, I would like to build on something Minister Baldo Kresalja of Peru said yesterday: that the rule of law is not just a legal problem, but is also one of culture and education. I agree, and I would add, it is also a problem of organizations and institutions. And that is where I started my statement and that is why your work matters so much and why we will do our best to ensure your recommendations are followed up.