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REPORT ON CICTE ACTIVITIES

(Delivered by Mr. Steven Monblatt, Secretary of CICTE)

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2004 saw a significant expansion of CICTE's capacity building and technical advisory services. Working with our partner organizations, we have provided training to over 300 port and airport security officials from 28 Member States, to help them meet the requirements of the International Maritime Organization's ISPS code, and the new International Civil Aviation Organization's new air security standards. In workshops and individual consultations, we have advised 15 Member State governments on how best to integrate into national legislation the requirements emanating from UNSCR 1373, its successors and related resolutions, the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism, and other international counter-terrorism conventions.

CICTE worked closely with the US Maritime Administration as the executive agent for the Inter-American Port Security Training Program. Through this program, CICTE and MARAD, in conjunction with the US Coast Guard and others, have conducted four courses, in Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Argentina, and El Salvador, which reached a total of 217 officials from 27 countries. We are planning three additional courses in the first half of 2005, two in the Andean region and one in the Southern Cone. They will complement the previous courses and bring to nearly 400 the number of professionals trained. At the same time, we are constantly evaluating the course content to adapt material from ISPS Code implementation and to add emphasis on the exchange of best practices that have developed during the ISPS code implementation process since its July 2004 entry into force.

Our focus on helping Member States meet the ISPS Code requirements led us to initiate a project to provide Member State governments with technical advisory missions designed to give them independent evaluations of their preparedness to meet Code audits. The first such mission went to St. Lucia and will be followed by additional visits to Suriname, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, and St. Kitts. Participating governments will receive detailed reports, recommendations for changes, guidance on financing, and follow-up training as required, all tailored to the specific needs of each port.

Building on the relationships developed during the Fourth Regular Session of CICTE, the Secretariat established an arrangement with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to fund scholarships for Member State professionals to attend ICAO training and certification courses in airport security and crisis management. These courses supplement the courses CICTE conducts with the US Transportation Security Agency (TSA) and the US Federal Aviation Agency (FAA). With TSA support, CICTE conducted an extensive aviation security course in El Salvador that certified 27 representatives from seven member states. The FAA supported two Dangerous Goods Handling training events that provided certification for 42 officials from 14 Member States. We are looking to build further on these relationships this year.

CICTE, in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has conducted several types of counter terrorism legislative support workshops over the past year. We have added representatives from the Commonwealth Secretariat, ILANUD, UPD, and the International Monetary Fund to various events when appropriate. These events consisted of both multinational and single country seminars, and have been tailored to meet the individual requirements of the developing

Member States. UNODC has been a steadfast partner and our joint projects allow for emphasis on both international treaties and UN resolutions as well as the unique requirements of the Inter-American Convention. I am pleased to note the significant increase in ratifications of the Inter-American Convention this past year. As of today, 12 Member States have ratified the Conventions four this year alone: Chile, Honduras, Dominica, and Paraguay.

We remain committed to providing this type of assistance and will work with Member State governments to meet their individual needs. One lesson that the Secretariat and our partners have learned from these projects is that that an approach to drafting national counter-terrorism legislation that incorporates different sectors of government and that reaches out to broader elements of society is key to success. The group and national seminars have stressed the inclusion of representatives from the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. On a number of occasions, at the request of the host government, engagement with civil society has been a key feature of these legislation development projects.

Recognizing that efficient border controls are a nation's first line of defense against terrorist infiltration of people and materials, we have worked closely with Member States to help them improve coordination of their customs and immigration services at key ports and border crossings. Together with CICAD and the Government of Canada, we sponsored a visit to the Port of Vancouver for officials from all Member States, where they could observe how Canada increased the security of border crossings without compromising the efficiency of port operations so essential to competitive training on a global market. Presentations from Chile, the US, Brazil and the RSS enhanced the program by demonstrating how other states have tackled similar issues. Officials from the Tri-Border area examined operations along the US-Mexico border to investigate how the cooperative processes on display there could be applied in their region to improve confidence and security of the borders.

At the same time, in response to Member State requests, we have begun a program to help develop, implement, and improve professional standards for customs officials. The first such workshop, held in Asuncion, Paraguay in July 2004, with the assistance of the US Customs Service, will be followed in 2005 by additional workshops throughout the region.

In addition, working under a mandate from the CHS and General Assembly, we drafted a proposal to develop a regional network of Cyber-Security Alert Centers. The plan, which was approved by the General Assembly in June as part of an overall cyber-security strategy to which both REMJA and CITEL also contributed, will provide Member States with new safeguards of their critical communications and computer infrastructures. CICTE has already begun laying the groundwork for implementation of the plan, holding a meeting of cyber-security practitioners in Ottawa, Canada in March, preparing, in conjunction with Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, a manual for establishing national CSIRTs, and identifying potential regional partners able to provide technical assistance.

The recent FATF Typologies Meeting in Moscow initiated the investigation of the linkages between drug trafficking and terrorism. The CICTE Secretariat was instrumental in placing this issue on the agenda and facilitated the participation of non-FATF OAS countries in the study. When published later this year, the study will provide the first systematic study of the scope and complexity of this relationship as a guide for further action.

CICTE remains a model for other regional organizations engaged in counter-terrorism programs. In the past year, the Secretariat has actively participated in meetings of the UNCTC, OSCE, FATF, and APEC and has been asked this year to provide technical assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Southeast Europe Cooperation Initiative.

The CICTE Secretariat is almost entirely the product of the active contributions of Member States and Observers. With one exception, we are staffed entirely by officials seconded to work at CICTE by Member States at their expense. Without the support of El Salvador, whose representative concluded his assignment early last year, Mexico, Trinidad & Tobago, the United States, the Inter-American Defense Board, and Uruguay, the CICTE program I have outlined would not have been possible.

However, as the CICTE program becomes more complex, relying on these generous staff secondments will become a high-risk strategy. We have a critical and continuing need for additional qualified staff to manage our projects. We hope, over the course of the next two years, to move towards a more traditional OAS model of staffing, consistent with the requirements of the Organization's ongoing reorganization.

Likewise, our program is funded entirely by financial contributions from the Member States and Observers. The generous contributions of Brazil, Canada, Chile, Trinidad & Tobago, the US, and Turkey, have gone directly to support each of these projects – again, without this support, which imposes no costs on the OAS Regular Fund, there would be no CICTE program. Finally, I want to thank our growing list of partner organizations, both within the Organization and without, for their active collaboration in our program. ICAO, the IMF, Carnegie-Mellon University, UNODC, UNHCHR, ILANUD, TSA, FAA, RSS, Commonwealth Secretariat, INTERPOL the Center for Hemispheric Studies, as well UPD, CICAD, the OAS Legal Office, the Ports Committee, CITEL, and REMJA have each made very valuable contributions to our program, in which they are full partners and deserve equal credit.

Terrorism in the Western Hemisphere is a real problem, though one that is, by its nature, often hidden from view. The goals of the CICTE 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. There can be no fool-proof guarantee against determined terrorist groups. However, the modest but efficient CICTE program will help Member States play their part in the international campaign against terrorism, and most important, make the lives of their citizens more secure, as they go about their business of building democratic, prosperous societies.