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REMARKS BY THE CHAIR OF CICTE 2009-2010,
AMBASSADOR GUSTAVO ALBIN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MEXICO TO THE OAS

(Given at the Inaugural Ceremony on March 17, 2010)

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Distinguished Ministers and Vice-Ministers,
Your Excellency, Mr. Secretary-General of the OAS,
Heads of Delegation,

Your Excellency, Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan, Chair of the United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee and Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations,

It is an honor and a privilege, as representative of Mexico, to address you in your capacity as Chair of the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism at this inauguration of its Tenth Regular Session.

First, my country wishes to express to all Member States, to the Organization, to the international institutions and, especially, to the entire team at the Secretariat of CICTE, whose work made this Committee a reality, its sincere gratitude and appreciation for the support it received during the time Mexico served as Vice Chair and Chair of the Committee.

Mexico assumed the Chair of CICTE in March 2009, guided by its commitment to advance the efforts, outlined by the OAS, to establish a safer and more prosperous Hemisphere.

We were also driven by Mexico's resolve to deepen the work that this Committee has been carrying out to strengthen the capacities of the States to prevent terrorism, by promoting consultation and by strengthening border controls, so that the scourge of terrorism will find no refuge, in any form, in our region.

During 2009, my country had the honor of participating, first hand, in the efforts being carried out by the Secretariat of CICTE. We have been interested and pleased to see its work advance in a promising direction. We have also witnessed the growing interest of member countries and observers in collaborating on achieving the Committee's objectives. It is clear that CICTE has highly useful tools, such as the National Points of Contact, which we should use to maximum effect.

In light of the foregoing, and through implementation of the 2009 "Declaration on Strengthening Border Controls," Mexico promoted consultation between Points of Contact regarding national needs and capacities. It is our hope that the results of this effort, which were presented this morning, will contribute to the work of the Secretariat of CICTE in its efforts to mobilize resources.

Mexico also attempted to ensure that the OAS videoconferencing platform is used to its full advantage, as a means of disseminating issues regarding emerging threats. The first videoconference, overseen by Dr. Thomas Inglesy, Director of the Center for Biosecurity at the University of Pittsburgh, who addressed the implications of planning for and responding to bioterrorism, was held

in November 2009. The second videoconference, for which the Instituto de Estudio sobre Crimen Cibernético is to be responsible, will be held in the coming weeks and will deal with legal challenges and trends related to the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Illicit drug trafficking, illicit trafficking in arms, money laundering, fraudulent use of documents and other forms of organized crime, including other emerging threats such as the use of the Internet and the diversion of nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological material, can also be used for terrorist purposes to provide material or financial support. These pose a potential, latent threat, one that does not recognize borders.

Given this situation, Mexico is renewing its call for an integral and proactive approach to preventing and combating terrorism. Let me briefly mention a number of actions that I believe are important for the region.

It is vital to strengthen the international and regional legal architecture, in order to prevent and combat terrorist acts. Similarly, complementing this, there need to be instruments to deal with organized crime.

Our region, as a whole, participates extensively in international instruments. However, we must take additional steps to move towards endorsing the 2005 amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, as well as the 1998 and 2005 instruments on the Protection of Fixed Platforms Located in the Ocean.

It is not sufficient, however, to be signatories to the various international treaties; it is equally important to adopt legislative measures that give authorities the power to investigate and sanction terrorist and terrorist-related acts, so as to ensure that they cannot be carried out with impunity.

We also believe that we must systematically integrate training programs, in order to allow us to put our practical knowledge to use, and thereby strengthen our capacities. In this connection, Mexico salutes the efforts of the Secretariat of CICTE in carrying out crisis management exercises.

In the effort to prevent terrorism, it is also important to create synergies between different issues, as well as between key stakeholders. Preparations for port and maritime security must be accompanied by instruction and training in civil aviation security – along with complementary efforts in other areas – to eliminate this threat.

While the State is responsible for preventing and combating terrorism, the international community has, itself, recognized that specialized regional and international institutions, the private sector and civil society as a whole also have a role to play in dealing with this challenge. Thus, it is important to work towards creating strategic partnerships that are based on common objectives but that have different functions and mandates.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the conclusion of its service as Chair, Mexico expresses its renewed confidence in the work of CICTE, and is certain that under the leadership of the Bahamas we will bolster our mission to establish a region that is better prepared to deal with the threat of terrorism. Let me once again welcome everyone to the Tenth Regular Session of CICTE.

Thank you.