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REMARKS BY THE CHAIR OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM 2011-2012, HER EXCELLENCY GILLIAN M. S. BRISTOL, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GRENADA TO THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

(Delivered at the Inaugural Session, held on March 7, 2011)

It is my honor and privilege to represent Grenada in its capacity as Chair of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to preside over this Twelfth Regular Session of CICTE –an annual event which has become a constant public demonstration of the collective political commitment of the CICTE Members to combat, prevent and eliminate terrorism.

Terrorism is no new phenomenon, but it is posing new threats. We are in a world of instant communication. New technology is increasingly complex and creates new vulnerabilities which, unfortunately, afford a new avenue for potential terrorist attacks.

The theme of the Twelfth Regular Session “Strengthening Cyber-Security in the Americas,” proposed by Guatemala, and embraced in the Draft Declaration tabled for consideration today, encompasses priorities, action, and collaboration necessary to face this terrorist threat at the national and hemispheric levels.

As we launch our deliberations on this theme, we are keenly aware that the use of the Internet by terrorists as a tool for supporting or perpetrating their activities, and the potential for cyber-attacks by terrorists against critical infrastructure, are among the primary challenges which countries face in terms of the misuse of the Internet.

We must therefore unite in our assessment of risk and vulnerability in order to determine the potential impact of an attack on critical infrastructure and ensure that such infrastructure is properly protected. Individual nations and the international community must prepare for the growing cyber capabilities of terrorists in addition to the threats posed by cyber criminals and others. While protective measures are essential in this regard, additional emphasis should be placed on developing capabilities and mechanisms to ensure resilience in the face of an attack.

As many experts will concur, the question is no longer whether or not a system will get attacked, but rather when, and Governments have an obligation to provide leadership and guidance to our nations and region so that we are prepared. We must be ready. Responding to cyber threats does not just require one government agency or department, but cooperation and communication between disparate entities domestically and internationally, and in both the public and private sectors, and in homes, schools, industries, and health and recreational facilities.

Implicit is the recognized need for international cooperation to consolidate common perspectives and effective responses to this grave threat, as well as to share resources and expertise. The importance of international cooperation is underscored by the fact that the challenges we face in the fight against terrorism are not just multidimensional, but also multinational. We must therefore, broaden our perception to the many ways in which our security is being threatened and participate in all efforts to confront those threats.

In this spirit of promoting closer cooperation and regional partnerships, Grenada continues to encourage all CICTE Members to take advantage of the unique and invaluable opportunities afforded us, with the CICTE Secretariat's support, to bolster our national and regional capacity to effectively counter this threat which operates out of sight behind the virtual wall of cyber space and invades our territories with precision and has the potential to do untold damage.

The Chair is encouraged that the work which we continue to do through this Committee will guarantee protections from this threat and ensure that our citizens, economies, and critical infrastructure are not in danger. The commitments we undertake on this occasion constitute another building block in our cyber defenses and indeed, can be considered an offensive against future cyber attacks. Grenada looks forward with anticipation to the unanimous adoption of the Draft Declaration

and Work Plan at the conclusion of our deliberations so that we can indeed make this crucial step forward for the future safety and security of our entire hemisphere.

Thank you.