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REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM 2011-2012 H.E. AMBASSADOR GILLIAN M. S. BRISTOL PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GRENADA TO THE OAS

(Delivered at the First Plenary Session on March 7th, 2012)

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OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM 2011-2012
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I am so proud to stand before this illustrious gathering to declare that the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism has earned the well-deserved international acclaim of being a model of effective and efficient multilateral cooperation in the fight against terrorism. This laudable reputation has been won notwithstanding that terrorism has taken on new proportions and transcended all imaginable borders – both real and virtual-, to become a major threat to peace, security, democracy, human rights and individual freedoms.

Our success to date lies in the realization by all our members that promoting and developing hemispheric cooperation among us is imperative for the achievement of the Committee's central purpose –to prevent, combat and eliminate terrorism.

Indeed, as set out in the Declaration of Renewed Hemispheric Commitment to Enhance Cooperation to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate Terrorism, adopted by this Committee in March 2011– our collective commitment has resulted in a re-energized strategic effort to strengthen mutual cooperation and has led to greater capacities and abilities to counter-terrorism during this past year.

Later on in this morning's session, the Secretariat of CICTE will present a report on its activities, illustrating the impressive results of more than 100 activities undertaken under the 2011 CICTE Work Plan. Thousands of newly trained officials are a testimony of the Secretariat's success- for which this Chair has to express its gratitude and congratulations. This record is of significance for the future of the counter-terrorism efforts in our region. The success and achievements of the CICTE program, possible only because of Member States' voluntary cooperation, means we can boast a far safer region today than we could one year ago. Member States have worked in tandem to build regional and sub-regional capacity, we have shared our experiences knowledge, best practices and expertise. Each of these efforts helps to reduce our individual and collective vulnerabilities.

The five overarching cooperation programs set out in the CICTE Work Plan and executed so ably by the Secretariat remain valid and relevant to bolstering security in areas of particular vulnerability to terrorist activity: our borders, critical infrastructure, financial systems, tourism, and major events. Work in these areas is bolstered by legislative assistance, crisis management exercises, policy development, and coordination with international partners engaged both in counter-terrorism and law enforcement. CICTE's unique network of "National Points of Contact" provides another layer of cooperation in this hemispheric effort, increases connectivity between our security and law enforcement authorities, and lends itself to ensuring that we maintain best practices and share crucial information and expertise.

From Grenada's perspective, CICTE has evolved from merely advancing its originally conceived goal of countering-terrorism –in the strict and limited way that that has been understood. CICTE's reach is now much broader, allowing it to impact on national and regional security and safety to an extent which may not have been readily conceivable at the outset. The vulnerabilities often cited for potential exploitation by terrorist groups are the very same ones that transnational criminal organizations seek to exploit, including: inadequate controls along land and sea borders; deficiencies in port and airport security; a lack of cooperation and information-sharing among counterpart security authorities within and between countries; insufficient training and professionalization of security personnel; and, increasingly, the

vulnerability of soft – that is, innocent civilian, targets, critical infrastructure, and critical information and communications infrastructure.

Taken as a whole, therefore, CICTE's programming seeks to address all manner of vulnerabilities with the objective of reducing the ability of terrorist groups to operate in the Americas and to diminish the likelihood and potential consequences of a terrorist attack. At the same time, this is done with full recognition of the reality that border vulnerabilities are, at present, more often exploited in the Americas for criminal purposes rather than potential terrorist acts, specifically trafficking in drugs, weapons, persons, other illicit substances and goods; money laundering; and other transnational criminal related activities.

The volume of requests over the past years for assistance in several programs of CICTE – especially Cyber-security, Maritime and Border Controls and Tourism Security- has steadily increased, with Member State authorities frequently addressing a variety of forms of transnational threats when citing their vulnerabilities and capacity gaps. Often, the justification for additional CICTE assistance is the improvement of cooperation with neighboring countries. I am pleased to note that while the Secretariat has well-recognized experience in this regard, it has done an even better job of this in the past year.

Recognizing that the security measures required to prevent transnational threats in general are often the same as those required to prevent terrorism, the Secretariat has continued to partner with a wide range of national, regional and international authorities engaged primarily in anti-crime efforts. This holistic approach has allowed the Secretariat to conduct projects aimed at simultaneously preventing and combating terrorism and transnational crime.

This multifaceted approach underscores the reality acknowledged by the OAS Member States in 2002 when they formally adopted the Declaration of Bridgetown and agreed that “security threats, concerns and other challenges in the hemispheric context are of diverse nature and multidimensional scope...”

Over the past ten years Latin American and Caribbean countries have experienced one of the highest rates of growth in internet users per capita -- around 1,000 per cent in Central and South America, and upwards of 1,400 percent in the Caribbean. This increase in the use of cyber networks has created vulnerabilities in our individual and collective security. Even the casual observer cannot have missed the number of recent articles, editorials and broadcasts that have reported on cyber attacks and threats to cyber security. We live in a world where every day groups or individuals are working to use cyber space to attack our critical infrastructure, disrupt government operations, conduct espionage on business and industry or deny vital internet services to our citizens. This is why Strengthening Cyber-Security in the Americas is such an appropriate and timely theme for this meeting.

Indeed, over the course of the last year, CICTE Member States have been eager to collaborate on all manner of cyber-security-related threats so that the Secretariat has been able to enhance the network of incident response professionals in Member States' Governments. This network of official contacts has allowed incident response personnel to quickly and reliably communicate with their counterparts in other countries in order to mitigate the effects of cyber incidents that affect national institutions and critical infrastructure which can so quickly migrate across borders. The result is that expanded cooperation and exchange of information and experiences has increased notably in the past year leading to greater technical capacity and capability, strengthened CSIRTS included.

Finally, the Chair wishes to place on record its appreciation to all Delegations for your proactive support to the Chair and Vice-Chair as we sought in 2011 to ensure that the minimum funding and personnel resources required for the Committee's ongoing work and implementation of the 2012 Work Plan were duly allocated to the Secretariat in the OAS Regular Program Budget.

I wish also to recognize the contributions of Argentina, The Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Grenada, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay through the secondment of staff or funding granted to the Secretariat. I am very gratified to note that Specific Funds granted to CICTE grew by 24% in 2011 which is an unequivocal testament to the commitment to CICTE by Member States and Permanent Observer States as well as their recognition of the invaluable work done by the Secretariat. Again, I pause to applaud Secretary Duguid and his team.

Excellencies, this completes a very brief overview of where we stand at this point from the Chair's perspective. We have accomplished much but even more remains on our agenda for the coming year and beyond. Fighting terrorism requires sustained attention, resources and commitment.

Permit me to express sincere appreciation to all the Governments of the Member States for your willing and tireless assistance in the organization and execution of CICTE's activities. I must acknowledge with special gratitude the generosity of the international organizations, partner institutions, and experts who have maintained their collaboration and support to this Committee.

My special recognition to the CICTE Secretariat's staff, whose unstinting dedication and commitment to excellence has allowed the Committee to achieve a proud record of accomplishments.

It has been an honor for Grenada to chair CICTE in 2011. The Committee has been particularly active during this period, and Grenada is especially appreciative of the close collaboration, very willing support and harmonious relationship with Guatemala in its capacity as Vice-Chair. I take this opportunity to express to the incoming Chair and Vice-Chair my country's sincere best wishes as they embark on the leadership of the Committee for the period 2012 to 2013. We are certain that in this forum a year from now, we will all be applauding their joint success.

Finally, permit me to reassure each of our sister nations –the esteemed members of this Committee– and the Secretariat, that the Government of Grenada remains resolute in its commitment to an ever-stronger hemispheric front against the heinous scourge of terrorism and that we will continue on this path with utmost respect for the international principles enshrined in the Charter of the Organization and the Statute of this Inter-American Committee against Terrorism.

I thank you.