



Organization of
American States



INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM (CICTE)

FOURTEENTH REGULAR SESSION
February 20-21, 2014
Washington, D.C.

OEA/Ser.L/X.2.14
CICTE/INF.6/14
25 February 2014
Original: Spanish

REMARKS BY THE CHAIR OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM 2013-2014

(Delivered by His Excellency Ambassador Andrés González Díaz, Representative of Colombia
to the OAS, during the inaugural ceremony held on February 20, 2014)

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AGAINST TERRORISM 2013-2014

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Mr. Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Albert R Ramdin;

His Excellency Ambassador Allan Culham, Permanent Representative of Canada and Vice Chair of
CICTE;

Distinguished Permanent Representatives of the OAS member states;

Distinguished Alternate Representatives and Delegates of the OAS member states;

Distinguished Representatives of the Permanent Observer States to the OAS;

Mr. Executive Director of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee, Jean-Paul Laborde;

Mr. Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, Neil Klopfenstein;

Ladies, gentlemen, and invited guests:

It is an especially pleasing honor for me, as Chair of the Inter-American Committee against
Terrorism, to welcome you at this inaugural meeting of the Committee's fourteenth regular session.

This meeting of CICTE affords us an ideal opportunity to reaffirm our repudiation of all
forms and manifestations of terrorism, and to reiterate that this scourge threatens our institutions,
democratic freedoms, human rights, peace, and security. I am fully confident that in the days ahead
we will have a fruitful dialogue on this sensitive and transcendental topic, which will enable us to
strengthen this important committee of our Organization.

Distinguished delegates,

Since its establishment in 1999, the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism has been a
model of multilateral cooperation in our Hemisphere. It has played a vital role in the promotion and
execution of cooperation among the member states to prevent, combat, punish, and eliminate
terrorism in the region. We can be proud that in carrying out these objectives our work has always
adhered to the principles of the OAS Charter and the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism,
with full respect for the countries' sovereignty, the rule of law, and international law, including
international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international refugee law.

The threat of terrorism continues to be real and present today. We have made great strides in
combating this scourge, especially since September 11, 2001, a date that radically altered our world.
The deplorable acts on that date not only undermined the values and principles of all states and the

democracy and freedoms of all societies, but also led us to recognize that the fight against terrorism would demand a comprehensive, multidimensional approach at the broadest possible levels of cooperation in order to confront this threat in all its forms and manifestations.

In this framework, at the start of the twenty-first century, our states in the region undertook to identify anti-terrorist actions, measures, policies, and strategies to implement at the regional, subregional, and national levels so we could have a common strategic and operational framework to combat the global threat of terrorism.

These efforts led in 2002 to the drafting and signature of the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, which established the Hemispheric legal and policy framework for development of the bases for implementing a concrete strategy to prevent, combat, punish, and eliminate terrorism by carrying out two clear lines of action: on one hand, regional and cross-border cooperation; and on the other hand, eradication of the financing of terrorism. This theme was a focus of the Committee's efforts in the past year, culminating at CICTE's thirteenth regular session with the adoption of the Declaration titled "Strengthening of Hemispheric Cooperation to Address Terrorist Financing and Money Laundering."

In this declaration, the 34 OAS member countries established their "*commitment to continue to adopt measures, to strengthen international cooperation mechanisms, especially at the hemispheric level, including the application of extradition and mutual legal assistance, as well as the exchange of information, including financial information, in accordance with domestic law, in order to avoid impunity, find, deny safe haven to, and bring to justice or extradite any person who supports, facilitates, participates, or attempts to participate in the financing, planning, preparation, or commission of terrorist acts.*"

Our government representatives at that meeting also reaffirmed our commitment to "*prevent the movement of terrorists, terrorist groups or whosoever finances terrorism by effective border controls and controls on the issuance of identity papers and travel documents, and through measures for preventing the counterfeiting, forgery, and/or fraudulent use of identity papers and travel documents.*"

Notwithstanding the significant progress we have made on this subject, much remains to be done in terms of organization and coordination of our partnership and cooperation in order to build our common security through our collective effort.

With this purpose in mind, CICTE has received well-merited international recognition as a model of effective and efficient multilateral cooperation. This praiseworthy reputation has been achieved despite the fact that terrorism has assumed new proportions and transcended unimaginable boundaries, both real and virtual, becoming a major threat to peace, security, human rights, and individual freedoms.

My country's experience, in its ongoing attack on terrorism for many years, has convinced me that this is a daily task that cannot be left undone. Danger could lurk anywhere, on any day. We therefore must be constantly alert, and it is especially important to have the greatest possible information so we can forestall any attack. In this sense international cooperation and the exchange of information and experiences is all the more indispensable.

We therefore consider that CICTE, as the natural forum for dealing with terrorism issues, must continue working toward our objective of building a Hemisphere that is increasingly secure, democratic, and respectful of human rights. We must remember that terrorism is not an isolated phenomenon; it is globalized. Terrorists have established networks that enable them to coordinate their attacks and capitalize on the latest information and communications technologies. They also have connections with transnational organized crime. If we work individually and fail to cooperate, they will win.

Contrariwise, if we honor the international commitments and apply the cooperation mechanisms in the fight against terrorism, we shall block the terrorists from continuing to wreak death and destruction, and go a long way toward eliminating this threat. In this regard, I reiterate that CICTE is the suitable policy forum for developing joint responses to reduce our vulnerability to this scourge in our Hemisphere. Colombia considers that CICTE has accomplished great work in defining the policies of the fight against terrorism. Our member states now have an important political and legal foundation for attacking this threat. The time has come to take another step. It is time to identify specific areas for cooperation and carry out targeted programs in these areas.

The work agenda we have before us affords us time for reflection and a productive and constructive discussion of this subject, the results of which are certain to benefit all the states and strengthen our capacity to combat terrorism.

This fourteenth regular session marks the end of one work year and the start of a new one. As I conclude this annual term as Chair of CICTE, I wish to reiterate, on behalf of Colombia, its irrevocable conviction that for peace to prevail over terror we must reaffirm our commitment to combat it head on, working in partnership.

I deeply appreciate the support provided during my term by the Committee's member states and the Executive Secretariat, and I reaffirm Colombia's commitment to lend its unwavering support to the work we are beginning today to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Thank you.