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**REMARKS OF THE CHAIR OF THE
INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM 2014-2015
JENNIFER MAY LOTEN,
INTERIM PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE OAS**

(Delivered at the Inaugural Ceremony, on March 19, 2015)

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Your Excellency Jose Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the OAS,
Your Excellency Ambassador Elisa Ruiz Diaz Bareiro, Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the OAS and Vice-Chair of CICTE,
Your Excellencies Heads of Delegations of the Fifteenth Regular Session of CICTE,
Your Excellencies, Permanent Representatives of the Member States of the OAS,
Distinguished Representatives of the Permanent Observers to the OAS,
Your Excellency Ambassador Adam Blackwell, Secretary for Multidimensional Security,
Mr. Neil Klopfenstein, Executive Secretary of CICTE,
Esteemed delegates and special guests,
Ladies and gentlemen:

Introduction

It is my honor to represent Canada in its capacity as Chair of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism and to welcome you at this inaugural ceremony of the Committee's Fifteenth Regular Session.

I am confident that in the days ahead we will have productive and effective exchanges on countering terrorism threats and advancing our hemisphere's security, democratic and prosperity agendas.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the OAS, Ambassador Elisa Ruiz Diaz Bareiro, for assuming the Chair of CICTE for the year 2015-2016. We look forward to working with Paraguay and we are confident that her leadership and engagement will be assets as we work together to address shared hemispheric security challenges.

Reinforcing our Chairmanship Priorities and Highlighting our Successes

When we undertook the role of Chair in 2014 our priorities were twofold. First, we wanted to encourage productive policy discussions and share best practices on areas of importance for the hemisphere. Second, we wanted to explore how member states together could enhance the effectiveness of CICTE and the National Points of Contacts.

On the first objective, we were satisfied to have a constructive policy discussion on how to better counter criminal activities that exacerbate the threat of terrorism. As we all know, the hemispheric security landscape continues to grow in complexity. The global illicit economy has become increasingly lucrative with cash derived from a wide range of illicit activities – from trafficking of drugs, persons, firearms, illegal natural resource exploitation through to corruption, kidnapping for ransom and extortion.

While the details of the relationship between terrorism and transnational organized crime vary and are evolving, it is generally recognized that terrorist networks have financed themselves through a range of criminal activities. More cooperation is needed to better understand those links and to counter them. As terrorist organizations extend their presences to more countries, and to cyberspace, Canada will continue to collaborate with countries of the hemisphere bilaterally and through the OAS to address this threat.

During our term as Chair, CICTE also had fruitful discussions on the need for functioning counter-terrorism legal regimes and criminal justice systems to respond to terrorism. Canada will remain committed through CICTE to support effective prevention measures and the strengthening of criminal justice approaches to terrorism that respect human rights.

As for our second objective, an important discussion continues on ways to enhance the efficiency of CICTE and the National Points of Contacts. We would like to reinforce the importance of CICTE's role as a forum for effective policy dialogue between member states. CICTE and the National Points of Contact are uniquely placed to raise awareness and facilitate collaboration to prevent and respond to emerging terrorist threats. Canada would like to encourage all member states to take better advantage of that role by facilitating the participation of their national counter-terrorism experts and ensuring that more time is dedicated to substantive policy discussions at our meetings.

The Executive Secretary of CICTE consulted member states to prepare the Five Year Strategic Plan that will be presented tomorrow. The objective will be to agree a clear roadmap for CICTE to remain relevant as a constructive policy forum that can adapt to new and emerging threats while continuing to address persistent challenges in our hemisphere. For this reason, it is important to ensure CICTE's priorities reflect those of the Member States and that counter-terrorism threats are dealt with in a comprehensive way.

There is a growing recognition that CICTE's donor base needs to expand to reflect the changing economic landscape in the hemisphere and the shared responsibility for addressing transnational threats. Voluntary contributions to CICTE have historically relied on only a very small number of donors and that funding model is no longer sustainable. It creates financial uncertainties that have a negative impact on CICTE's long-term planning and capacity-building efforts.

Canada is pleased to see that a number of non-traditional donors have contributed this year to CICTE and we hope CICTE will be able to count on their continued support in the coming

years. These successes should not prevent us to explore other alternatives to ensure a more stable and financial footing for CICTE. Consistent with broader OAS reform and the identification of security as an OAS “pillar”, this Committee’s membership should push for the CICTE Secretariat’s long-term financial sustainability as a component of OAS budget deliberations.

New and Emerging Threats: Foreign Fighters, Violent Extremism and ISIL

We know that terrorism has a global reach and that no country is immune. Canadians were shocked by the terrorist attacks that occurred on our soil in October 2014, in Australia in December 2014 and in France and Denmark earlier this year. Although we recognize that each country’s experience is unique, we have a shared interest in addressing the phenomenon of foreign fighters and violent extremism.

Canada is deeply concerned about foreign fighters as they pose a security threat abroad and upon their return. Canada is witnessing its citizens leaving to take part in extremist activities overseas in countries such as Somalia, Syria and Iraq. Other countries in the hemisphere have seen citizens join conflict elsewhere. This growing phenomenon demands a consistent, comprehensive and coordinated transnational response based on common goals, values and institutions.

Canada recently introduced the Anti-terrorism Act 2015 that will enhance information-sharing for national security purposes, and provide law enforcement and national security agencies with the additional tools they need to prevent, detect, deny and respond to terrorism. This proposed legislation would strengthen Canada’s ability to work with other countries against common threats.

Critical Infrastructure

The theme of this year’s Fifteenth Regular Session - “Protecting Critical Infrastructure from Emerging Threats” - proposed by Paraguay and embraced in the CICTE Declaration, is a worthy focus of our efforts to face new terrorist threats at the national and transnational levels.

Looking towards this year’s theme, Canada recognizes that while the Internet is an important engine for prosperity, our societies have increasingly become vulnerable to a wide range of cyber-threats. Dealing with cyber threats nationally is not enough and we should continue to improve cyber infrastructure protection and collaborative incident response capabilities in the Americas.

It is also vital to recognize the interconnected nature of critical infrastructure across territories and national borders as disruptions could result in adverse economic and security effects, and even catastrophic loss of life. Protecting such infrastructure is a shared responsibility of public and private actors, requiring awareness and cooperation among all the different players.

Conclusion

Let me close by repeating that CICTE has been and needs to be a reliable and capable partner in strengthening hemispheric security in the region, and a body that should be prepared to face new and emerging threats.

It was a great privilege for Canada to lead CICTE this past year and I would like to offer a sincere thanks to all member states for their support throughout Canada's chairmanship.

I would also like to thank Mr. Neil Klopfenstein, Executive Secretary of CICTE, and his dedicated team of officials, for all the work and commitment throughout the past twelve months and their efforts to make today's meeting a success.

As we pass the gavel to Paraguay, we would like to encourage all member states to make the most of this dedicated forum and to consider how else each member state can contribute to realizing CICTE's objectives.

The results CICTE delivers depend upon all of us.

Thank you.