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**Remarks by Christopher Hernandez-Roy Director, Department of Public Security of the OAS at  
the Second Regular Meeting 2009 of the Summit Implementation Review Group**

**February 9, 2009**

I would like to start off by talking about two things which are not Security, but which security has a direct impact on. Those are Democracy and Development. Without security it is difficult or impossible for a country to develop – and it has been shown through a number of studies that as insecurity increases so do calls for hard-line responses which can erode democracy. The Security-Development-Democracy link has been understood by development institutions like the World Bank, the IDB and the OECD, who today include security as an integral part of their development work – where only a few years ago they shunned it. The OECD in particular, through its Development Assistance Committee has pioneered Security Sector Reform. The OAS, as an institution dedicated to strengthening democracy, promoting integral development and promoting sound public security polities is very conscious of this three-way link. I say this because I believe this trinity should be more forcefully stated in the draft declaration.

Second, I'd like to remind the delegations about the seriousness of the security situation facing the region – I am speaking here about crime and violence, and not traditional concepts of security, such as defense. Our region has the second highest homicide rate of any region on earth – and some of our countries have the highest homicide rates. The Secretary General's report on Crime and Violence in the Americas, presented at the First meeting of Minister of Public Security of the Americas, held this past October in Mexico City, offers a detailed analysis of the serious problems facing the region and presents a number of suggestions for addressing them.

The Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted in 2003 remains the fundamental document expressing the member states' view of the multidimensional series of threats, concerns and other challenges to security in the region.

Back in 2004 in Nuevo Leon, our leaders reiterated the Declaration on Security in the Americas, which had just been approved one year before, recalling that the document was based, among other things, on the multidimensional concept of security as well as the principle that the basis and purpose of security is the protection of human beings.

- That Declaration specifically identified the proliferation of HIV/AIDS as an important security threat
- It was also the first summit since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, and therefore the leaders stated that terrorism, as well as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, were grave threats to international security;

- Transnational Organized Crime, including illicit trafficking in drugs, arms, and persons, and money laundering were also highlighted as grave threats.

The Mar del Plata declaration, approved two years later, contained four paragraphs on security which,

- Reiterated member government's commitment to the objectives and purposes contained in the Declaration on Security
- Stressed the importance of combating terrorism, especially through the timely exchanges of information and mutual legal assistance; and
- Emphasized the concern for the criminal gang problem and its related aspects.

While both of these summits contained some important security-related language, not since the Quebec City Summit held back in 2001, has there been Presidential language with a level of detail and specifics that the situation warrants. And by almost all accounts, the security situation has deteriorated since then.

Against this backdrop – what do we think should be included in this most recent Presidential declaration? What's new in terms of our concerns, or our approach to those concerns? What level of detail should there be in a presidential declaration?

Without diminishing the importance of the Declaration, or the traditional security and defense concerns contained in that document; or, on the other end of the spectrum, environmental threats and disasters, discussion of security questions in the OAS over the past couple of years has increasingly been centered on the matter of how to improve public security or public safety in the region in light of alarming increases in crime and violence.

In light of this evolution, we now have a new technical-political forum which will no doubt become a key tool in Inter-American collaboration to improve public safety or security. That is of course the Meeting of Minister Responsible for Public Security in the Americas, known by its Spanish acronym, MISPA.

The complexity, gravity, and urgency of crime and violence in the region made it essential to achieve ongoing coordination, at the highest level, of the efforts of those responsible for law enforcement in our region – this will now, hopefully, be accomplished through MISPA.

This ministerial meeting should constitute the technical and political framework for the Hemisphere in all public security-related matters channeling horizontal transfers of successful experiences; promoting improvements in the quality of information on security matters, by establishing a shared set of indicators; for developing communication strategies that provide real insight into the current state of affairs; for promoting efforts to update legislation, to update organizational structures, and to achieve the participation in all these efforts of civil society and private enterprise.

I believe that the Presidential declaration should not only take note that the MISPA I was held in Mexico City back in October - and ask for follow-up actions to be taken, but should also formally introduce, approve and endorse this new ministerial forum, giving it its overall purpose and mandate – and the strength it needs to succeed in its critical task.

In terms of MISPA Follow-up, we are very pleased to see a reference to the feasibility study that we are conducting examining the best ways to strengthen the training and education of law-enforcement

and public security personnel. May we also suggest that a reference be included regarding the MISPA mandate encouraging member states to consider developing comparable public security parameters. The OAS Secretariat has begun working in collaboration with CISALVA of the University del Valle de Colombia and the Inter-American Development Bank who have begun an indicators pilot project in four countries. We hope to present preliminary results at the Public Security Experts Group meeting in Uruguay later this year prior to presenting them at MISPA II. As some of you may be aware, the lack of comparable indicators, or simply basic information, is one of the root difficulties in the development of sound public security policies.

On the question of terrorism, the draft declaration contains a forceful and comprehensive paragraphs, which probably cannot be much improved upon. I would just like to suggest that the order of the paragraphs be reexamined, as the terrorism paragraph is perhaps not the most logical follow-on to the first paragraph, which ends with a reference to MISPA – especially when there are other draft paragraphs which also refer to the MISPA.

Regarding paragraph 47 which discusses transnational organized crime, I think no one will disagree that fighting arms trafficking would be an activity which would contribute to fighting organized crime. However, the paragraph as drafted could lead to an assumption that the framework for fighting arms trafficking is the OAS Hemispheric Plan of Action against TOC, rather than the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Related Materials, known as the CIFTA. Some clarification, and perhaps an explicit reference to CIFTA, would seem to be required in this regard.

On the question of illicit drugs and drug trafficking there is no reference to prevention or rehabilitation. Consideration could be given to committing member governments to conduct and evaluate long-term substance abuse prevention programs in our schools, workplaces and communities, and to seek to include treatment and rehabilitation programs for drug-dependent people under the umbrella of our national health care services. The positive impact that treatment for drug dependent offenders under court supervision has on reducing recidivism and helping prevent relapse into drug use, thereby also contributing to a reduction in the drug market, might also be included.

I want to say a few words about Domestic Violence. When one thinks about crime and violence in the region, organized crime, drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and gangs, to name but a few of the most notorious problems, immediately come to mind. However, domestic violence is one of the principal problems facing the region, and according to some organizations, the principal source of violence in the region, more serious than some of these other more notorious crimes. Yet rarely does domestic violence receive the attention it merits.

As we reported in the Secretary General's report presented at MISPA I, In Latin America, domestic violence affects between 25% and 50% of women, depending on the definition used. This figure should serve as a warning to a hemisphere marked by brutal murders of women by their next of kin, spouses and partners. Nor is this a problem that only affects women. Children are very often the direct objects of this violence which can lead to a vicious cycle of violence as they grow into adolescence and early adulthood.

Not since the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, eight years ago, have our leaders touched on this important subject. Our leaders have an opportunity to forcefully recognize the serious problem of domestic violence and to take bold action, for instance, by endorsing the July 2008 conclusions of the First Multilateral Evaluation Round of the Conference of States Party to the Convention of Belem do Para, among other possible initiatives.

On the question of gangs, contained in paragraph 48, there is a mandate to the OAS to prepare a regional strategy to promote Inter-American cooperation in dealing with criminal gangs. This would seem redundant, as the General Assembly, has already instructed the OAS to perform this task and a working group of the Committee on Hemispheric Security was recently created under the chairmanship of Ambassador Skinner Klee of Guatemala. Perhaps a statement, similar to the one on police training, where the Heads would look forward to the “regional strategy on gangs being developed by the OAS” would be in order. Another minor note on this paragraph is the use of the word “Delinquent” in the last sentence, where “offenders” might be more appropriate.

The past two Summit Declarations, and the present draft do not specifically mention traditional security concerns or defense. I believe that a reference to the Eighth Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, held last September in Banff, Alberta, and to the concepts discussed by the Ministers at that meeting, including confidence-building and transparency in conventional weapons acquisitions, should be considered for inclusion in the present draft. Recognition of the significant effort made by a number of the militaries of the region to provide security and stability in Haiti, for instance, might also be worth considering.

And finally, and on a lighter note, a comment on the title of this section. It is labeled “Strengthening Public Security”. While I as the Director of the Department of Public Security, would be clearly pleased with such a title, I believe that it is not an accurate description for the content of this section – certainly if specific references were to be made, for instance, to the CDMA process. The traditional Summit and OAS heading has been “Hemispheric Security” but perhaps a more up-to-date label, which would be in consonance with the Declaration on Security in the Americas, might be “Multidimensional Security”.