

THE CARTAGENA DECLARATION

Regional Summit on the World Drug Problem, Security and Co-operation

August 1, 2008

Cartagena de Indias, Republic of Colombia

The Heads of State/Government and/or Heads of Delegation of the countries of the Caribbean, Central America, Colombia, México and Venezuela, meeting in the city of Cartagena de Indias (Colombia) on July 30 - 31 and August 1, 2008 for the Regional Summit on the World Drug Problem, Security and Co-operation:

ACKNOWLEDGING the efforts of the countries of the region within the national sphere and within the scope of regional and bilateral co-operation in the fight against illicit drugs and connected crimes;

ACKNOWLEDGING the efforts of the countries that took part in the last Regional Summit on Drugs, Security and Co-operation, held in Santo Domingo during March 2007, taking as a basis the actions being carried out by the countries within the framework of the UN and the OAS, as well as the regional, sub-regional and bilateral mechanisms and initiatives for an exchange of information, experiences, training and institution building;

RECOGNIZING the efforts made by the Member States of the Central American Integration System (SICA) and by the CARICOM Council of Ministers of National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) in the respective drafting and approval of the Security Strategy for Central America and Mexico, and the Action Plan for the Central American region, as well as the CONSLE Regional Security Strategy and Action Plan, which contain a series of initiatives to counter illicit drug trafficking, its connected crimes and trans-national organized crime;

REAFFIRMING that the fight against the world drug problem and its connected crimes must be addressed from the standpoint of joint and shared responsibility, so each State may assume its commitment on this matter in a decisive manner and with political will;

REAFFIRMING also that the fight against the world drug problem and its connected crimes must be addressed with full respect for the objectives and principles embodied in the United Nations Charter;

REAFFIRMING also the commitments that the Member States assumed in the Political Declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly during its XX Special Session dedicated to common action to counter the world drug problem and highlighting the importance of the work being done to review the Declaration, wherein the States acknowledge that action to counter the world drug problem is a joint and shared responsibility that demands a multilateral, integral and balanced approach;

REAFFIRMING the concern for the increase in violence that may be occasioned by the production and illicit trafficking of drugs and weapons;

ACKNOWLEDGING that, although the States, civil society and multilateral organizations at regional, bi-regional, hemispheric and global level have redoubled their efforts to combat the world drug problem and its connected crimes, security and development continue to be threatened by such crimes;

REAFFIRMING the concern about the new global and regional trends and patterns evidenced by the trafficking of illicit drugs of natural and synthetic origin, chemicals, precursors and other substances used to produce illicit drugs;

ACKNOWLEDGING that international co-operation in the fight against drug production, trafficking, and consumption, in addition to the current scope of the problem as it affects the region, demand added financial support, technology and training consistent with the priorities determined by our States;

RECOGNIZING the importance of promoting effective co-operation, in real time, among the competent authorities to strengthen the capacity for response to control illicit trafficking in drugs, chemicals, precursors and other substances used to produce illicit drugs, in accordance with the present Declaration and the attached Action Plan, and the international commitments assumed by our States;

CONCERNED about the enormous national costs and sacrifices in terms of human life and the social cost in general created by the fight against the world drug problem and its connected crimes;

CONCERNED also about the serious environmental impact to ecosystems that are considered vital, generated by the clearing and burning of large forested areas to make way for illicit crops, processing and the construction of clandestine air strips, shipyards and piers, all of which contributes to the destruction of the habitat of countless species of fauna and flora, endangers the genetic potential found in those areas, and pollutes soil and water through the indiscriminate use and dumping of chemical substances;

EMPHASIZING the relevance of the work being done by existing organizations and mechanisms, particularly those of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and its Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), which enable the participating States to have a better understanding of the world drug problem at the hemispheric level, to value regional efforts to respond adequately, to recognize the progress being made, and to set policies for the future;

REAFFIRMING the commitment of the international community to regard alternative integral, preventive and sustainable development as a way to reduce the supply of illicit drugs and to discourage their trafficking, by planning actions for prior eradication and a policy of zero illicit crops to reinforce the communities and territories that are affected or threatened by illicit crops, as an essential part of the strategy to counter the world drug problem, pursuant to their national policies;

RECOGNIZING the importance of facilitating full participation, for all States that manifest their will to do so, in the processes and mechanisms for regional co-operation intended to address the world drug problem and its connected crimes;

REAFFIRMING the existing commitment to strengthen relations among the countries in our region to confront the world drug problem and its connected crimes, which threaten the safety of our societies and institutions;

HEREBY DECLARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. The fight against the world drug problem is a joint and shared responsibility that must be assumed in a coordinated manner with respect to every link in the drug chain: demand, production, trafficking, distribution, diversion of precursor chemicals and other substances used in the production of illicit drugs, asset laundering and other connected crimes;
2. There must be a balance between reducing demand and controlling supply so that both tasks are mutually reinforced within the scope of the commitments assumed in the Political Declaration and in the Action Plan adopted by the United Nations General Assembly during its XX Special Session on common action to counter the world drug problem (UNGASS 98);
3. The build-up in regional co-operation in this area must remain founded on full respect for the principles embodied in the United Nations Charter, in International Law, and in the domestic legislation of the States;
4. It is important to strengthen, pursuant to the domestic legislation of the States and with full respect for their jurisdiction, the co-operation among judicial authorities, particularly concerning mutual legal assistance on criminal matters, as well as among the police and all other competent agencies of the countries of the region, based on non-interference in the domestic affairs of the States, respect for sovereignty and the self-determination of peoples at every level, to prevent and combat the illicit trafficking of drugs via air, sea, ports and borders, as well as the illicit trafficking of weapons, asset laundering, and the diversion of controlled precursor chemicals and the finished products that contain them;
5. They agree to continue working to perfect the measures adopted nationally, in keeping with pertinent international instruments, so as to prevent organized crime from acquiring and using firearms and ammunition, as well as to establish and share databases on firearms, ammunition and explosives impounded from organized crime;
6. It is important to strengthen and update the co-operation mechanisms that already exist to prevent the diversion of internationally controlled precursors and chemical substances that are used to produce illicit drugs, such as action undertaken within the scope of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), particularly notification prior to the export of such substances;

7. They pledge to encourage the creation or strengthening of national drug observatories in the countries of the region and to work, as appropriate, in conjunction with the CICAD Inter-American Observatory on Drugs or other instances for bilateral or multilateral co-operation that facilitate the participation of the interested States, so as to develop information and statistical systems that support decision-making and the definition of national policies to counter the world drug problem and its connected crimes;
8. They agree to share the acquired experiences and best practices that have been developed by our countries, doing so within the framework of international, regional, sub-regional and bilateral agencies that specialize in combating the world drug problem and its connected crimes;
9. Action to reduce the use of illicit drugs and the undue use of licit drugs must be strengthened by affording special attention to prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation, and social reintegration through campaigns to raise public awareness; accordingly, they pledge to reinforce the sub-programmes and/or initiatives within national anti-drug programmes that may help to reduce the demand for drugs;
10. They reaffirm the commitment to strengthen the mechanisms for co-ordination and an exchange of experience among the countries in the region on technical and institutional aspects, so as to reduce illicit crops and illicit drug production, and to promote action to recover and consolidate the fragile ecosystems affected by illicit crops, through support from international co-operation;
11. They urgently call upon donor governments, as well as multilateral organizations and international and regional financial institutions to increase the financial, technical and training assistance provided to our countries, pursuant to the principle of joint and shared responsibility and as an indication of their commitment in the fight against the world drug problem;
12. They recognize, in this context, the necessity of additional co-operation for the countries that are not drug producers or consumers, but carry out significant and costly efforts to combat the traffic;
13. They reiterate their willingness to participate in the process to review the commitments adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations during its XX Special Session (UNGASS), which was dedicated to common action to counter the world drug problem, and to participate actively in the preliminary work and the high-level segment scheduled within the scope of the 52nd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which will be held in March 2009;
14. They instruct the competent agencies of their States to implement the Action Plan, which is an integral part of this Declaration, doing so pursuant to their domestic legislation and taking into account the action being carried out within the scope of the UN and the OAS, so as to contribute to the security of the region by countering the world illicit drug problem and its connected crimes;

15. The States signing this Declaration pledge to follow up on and comply with the commitments set forth in the present Declaration and in its Action Plan.

The Heads of State/Government and/or Heads of Delegation express their gratitude and appreciation for the hospitality extended to them by the government and the people of Colombia during their visit to the country.

Done in Cartagena de Indias on the first (1) day of August of the year two thousand eight (2008) in three original versions in Spanish, French and English, each being equally authentic.

Barbados

Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Commonwealth of Dominica

Co-operative Republic of Guyana

Dominican Republic

Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis

Jamaica

Republic of Colombia

Republic of Costa Rica

Republic of Cuba

Republic of El Salvador

Republic of Guatemala

Republic of Haiti

Republic of Honduras

Republic of Nicaragua

Republic of Panama

Republic of Suriname

Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

United Mexican States