

The Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas
STATEMENT BY THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA

Dominica's delegation is honoured to be at this conference and would like to express Dominica's most profound gratitude to the host nation Canada for its exceptional reception thus far. Mr. Chairman, Dominica stands ready and committed to working with member states of the Americas on matters related to crime and security.

Dominica's major security challenges continue to be illegal drugs, trading in illegal firearms, and illegal immigration. Mr. Chairman, our traditional and colonial trading links provide an almost natural route for criminal elements using "go fast boats" originating from South and Central America heading to the American market. Dominica serves as a transshipment point in this illicit drugs and firearms enterprise. Mr. Chairman, the spill-over effect is enough to cause havoc to our people, bearing in mind Dominica's small population size. There is also evidence of some degree of mixing between our local criminals and these international criminals on our high seas.

Mr. Chairman, the Government of Dominica has had to put its limited resources that could have been used in areas such as health or put into productive enterprise into investment in assets for the police force. The Government of Dominica is currently procuring a new patrol vessel for the coast guard unit and has significantly enhanced the police force intelligence capability. With the assistance of the regional security system (RSS) and international partners a number of these “go fast boats” have been intercepted.

Further, Mr. Chairman the issues surrounding illegal drugs and firearms are not the only threat to Dominica’s security. Dominica is very concerned about the sustainability of its developmental efforts. In this regard I want to make specific reference to external shocks from international markets and from natural and man-made disasters. Dominica is also prone to hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes.

Mr. Chairman, even as our ability to earn a decent standard of living for our people is threatened by the developments in the international market place, natural disasters compel us to replace economic and social infrastructure and production capacity.

Mr. Chairman, putting in place a mechanism to respond to the medium and long-term assistance needed for reconstruction after natural disasters must be seen as a major priority for this conference.

Mr. Chairman, the Dominican delegation urges the conference to give due consideration to the idea of member states within the Americas with huge resources to assist the less developed member states to invest in human security. Human security issues such as education, the eradication of poverty, HIV AIDS and unemployment. Mr. Chairman, there will be no peace and security with ridiculously high levels of poverty and unemployment. We often speak of a “New World Order” but the realities we see on the streets in many countries speak to a “New World Disorder”.

Mr. Chairman, what we need is a “New Human Order” and this conference provides us with the chance to ensure that.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, I urge the conference to develop a framework to evaluate the implementation rate of the Declarations that

**have been signed by member states within the Americas: two years ago
for example we met in Nicaragua and agreed to and signed a
Declaration, but have we honoured in part or in whole the said
Declaration? Mr. Chairman we can do better than that. This should
not be a public education exercise. Thank you.**