

VIII Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas



Declaration of Banff

5 September 2008

DECLARATION OF BANFF

The Ministers of Defence and Heads of Delegation participating in the VIII Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas (CDMA), meeting in Banff, Canada, 2-6 September 2008;

Reaffirming their commitment to the full observance of the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) as well as the Inter-American Democratic Charter and its values, principles and mechanisms;

Inspired by the principles and commitments of the Summits of the Americas, the Declaration on Security in the Americas, and the principles and agreements contained in the Consensus of the Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas adopted at the VII CDMA in Managua, Nicaragua in 2006;

Bearing in mind their determination to give impetus to the theme of the VIII CDMA, “Hemispheric, Regional and Sub-regional Defence and Security Enhancement: Confidence Building Through Cooperation and Collaboration;” and

Recognizing the importance of differentiating the realities of defence and security, reaffirming the principles and commitments established at the successive Conferences of Defence Ministers of the Americas, and recognizing that regional diversity in defence and security means accepting the existence of different realities in each country, as regards the approaches, legal standards and instruments used by the various States of the region in facing their challenges,

DECLARE:

1. Their firm desire to recognize the Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas (CDMA) and its principles and commitments as a key element in the Inter-American system, through the provision of the Declarations of the Conferences of Defence Ministers of the Americas, by the host country, to the Secretariat of the Summit of the Americas, and through the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) to the Permanent Council and the General Assembly of the OAS.
2. Their decision to instruct the Executive Secretariat of the CDMA to take note of the work of the Inter-American Naval Conference (IANC), the Conference of American Armies (CAA) and the System of Cooperation Among the American Air Forces (SICOFAA), to foster and strengthen the other existing fora such as the Conference of Central American Armed Forces (CFAC), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Standing Committee of Military Chiefs and the Regional Security

System (RSS), and to encourage support for these and other bilateral, sub-regional and regional bodies for co-operation in defence issues.

3. The importance of adopting, implementing and strengthening confidence and security-building measures amongst Member States identified *inter alia* in the Declarations of Santiago and San Salvador and the Miami Consensus, in order to strengthen bilateral, sub-regional, regional, and hemispheric relations contributing to international stability, peace, co-operation and security. In this sense, they invite those states who have not yet done so to consider signing and ratifying the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions.
4. Their decision to encourage Member States to send the United Nations Standardized Reporting Instrument for Military Expenditures to the United Nations (UN) and to send a copy of such information to the OAS as another important step forward in the area of transparency and confidence-building.
5. Their support for measures that strengthen defence and security co-operation among the countries of the Americas, in particular the smaller states, whose level of vulnerability is greater in the face of traditional and non-traditional threats.
6. Their agreement to explore the possibility of the establishment of an inventory of capacities and the creation of a regional working group in support of civilian relief agencies and organizations, with the aim of improving communication, coordination, planning, and response to natural or non-natural disasters.
7. Their support for OAS efforts to further hemispheric co-operation to respond to natural disasters through the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR), and reaffirm the role of the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in co-ordinating military and civil defence assets placed at its disposal by Member States.
8. The importance of the support provided by the armed forces and security forces to civil authorities during national and international major events within the framework of national constitutions and legislation.
9. Their continued recognition of the work with regard to stabilization and reconstruction carried out by the Member States of the hemisphere participating in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), their sustained commitment to this Mission conducted at the request of the Government of Haiti, and the valuable political consensus-building by the Friends of Haiti.
10. Their commitment to encourage Member States to make the efforts they consider necessary to improve their capacities to participate voluntarily in peace operations

in accordance with UN standards and procedures, in order to help fill current requirements by this organization.

11. Their intention to continue incorporating a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, as stated in Resolution No. 1325 (2000) of the United Nations Security Council.
12. Their commitment to continue promoting gender mainstreaming in the area of defence.
13. Their support for education and training programmes based on international best practices and regional co-operation through such initiatives as the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC), the newly formed Latin American Association of Peacekeeping Centres (ALCOPAZ), and other organizations with similar objectives.
14. Their support for the continued development of professional civilian and military expertise within national institutions responsible for defence and security.
15. Their recognition of the important contribution made by civil society and academia to promote defence and security co-operation among the Member States of this Conference.
16. Their recognition of the progress made in adopting and implementing policies that promote human rights and international humanitarian law, especially fostering an institutional culture of respect through awareness-building activities and the dissemination and incorporation of information into educational curricula and operational practice.
17. Their acknowledgement of their existing obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as applicable, particularly in situations of armed conflict, as well as their continued commitment to strengthening their application.
18. Their most vehement condemnation of terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, as they consider it criminal and unjustifiable under any circumstances, regardless of where and by whom it is committed, and because it constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security and to democracy, stability, and prosperity of the countries of the region.
19. Their rejection of the presence or action of illegal armed groups that carry out or promote violence, regardless of their origin or motivation.

20. Their commitment to fight transnational organized crime, including illicit trafficking in weapons, trafficking in drugs and their precursor chemicals, trafficking in human beings, human smuggling, corruption, money laundering and other related crimes, which affect the full enjoyment and exercise of human rights and constitute a grave threat to international peace and security, institutions and democratic values, as well as the determination of Member States to confront these threats in a co-operative, decisive and comprehensive manner, in accordance with all related international instruments, ensuring full respect for international law, human rights and due process standards, and in accordance with each Member State's constitutional order and national legislation.
21. Their reiteration of the region's commitment to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council.
22. Their determination that the Member States prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trafficking in, the illegal use of, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons consistent with the aims of the United Nations Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA), and their decision to urge Member States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying this convention.
23. Their determination to consider implementing the recommended guidelines contained in OAS Resolution AG/RES 2145 (XXXV-O/05) "Denying MANPADS to Terrorists: Control and Security of Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS)".
24. Their support for continued close co-operation among the past, current and future host countries, to facilitate the delivery, operation and continuity of successive Conferences.
25. Their reiteration that substantive preparations for the Conference, the conference agenda, themes and declaration remain the exclusive responsibility of the Ministers of the Member States of the CDMA.
26. Their appreciation of the support offered by the Secretary General of the OAS to host the institutional memory of the Conference, and their decision to explore the areas of support and the alternatives for implementing this support to immediately strengthen the institutional memory of the CDMA.
27. Their decision to create a Working Group, to be chaired by the current CDMA host, composed of all the former host countries, the current host country, the future host

country, and open to the participation of other interested Member States, to assess by December 2008 the modalities of cooperation with the OAS, including the Inter-American Defence Board (IADB).

28. Their satisfaction at the designation of Bolivia as the Host Country for the IX CDMA in 2010.
29. Their gratitude to the Government and people of Canada, through the Department of National Defence, for their hospitality over the course of this Conference.