



X CONFERENCE OF DEFENSE MINISTERS OF THE AMERICAS

PUNTA DEL ESTE – REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY

OCTOBER 8-10, 2012

DECLARATION OF PUNTA DEL ESTE

(October 10, 2012)

The Defense Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the participating countries of the X Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, gathered in the city of Punta del Este, Republic of Uruguay, held on October 8 to 10, 2012;

FULLY COMMITTED to the respect of the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations, and of the Organization of American States, as well as in the Inter-American Democratic Charter;

BEARING IN MIND the principles and declarations adopted and ratified in the Conferences of Defense Ministers of the Americas and, particularly in the Declaration of the IX Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Plurinational State of Bolivia, on November 22-25, 2010;

RECOGNIZING that, despite the various realities and priorities of the countries of the Hemisphere, the Conference is an important forum for dialogue, discussion of ideas and consideration of defense and hemispheric security matters, contributing to strengthening the transparency, confidence and cooperation of the Members States.

CONVINCED that the 10th anniversary of the Conference of Security of the Americas is an appropriate occasion to reinforce bilateral, sub-regional, and regional cooperation agreements and mechanisms both in matters of defense and of security.

DECLARE THAT:

1. They value democratic institutions as the cornerstone to achieve peace, security, stability, social equity and development for the countries of the Hemisphere, within the framework of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the Declaration on Security in the Americas.
2. They reaffirm their commitment to preserving the vitality and spirit of the Williamsburg Principles, to safeguard and develop democracy, peace, security, solidarity and cooperation among the nations of the Americas.

3. They intend to continue developing measures to promote confidence and security, as a means to contribute to the safeguard of peace and the consolidation of democracy, through the implementation of, and reporting on OAS Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs), participation in the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions, and the preparation and presentation of standardized reports on defense expenses, in accordance with the instruments implemented by the United Nations (UN), and other regional or sub-regional mechanisms, as well as the exchange of information on the situation of each State of the Hemisphere as regards the use, storage, production and transference of antipersonnel mines and the destruction thereof, in the light of the specific international instruments.
4. They affirm that each Member State has the sovereign right to determine the requirements and instruments for their defense, as well as to determine their own national priorities.
5. They recognize the importance of cooperation in defense and security among the countries of the Americas to face new challenges and they support measures to strengthen their institutional capacities, and commit to update the Inter-American defense system.
6. Taking into account paragraph 6 of the Declaration of the IX Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas, Resolution AG/RES 2632 (XLI-O/11) and the Resolution AG/RES 2735 (XLII-O/12), to request that the Permanent Council of the OAS schedule and hold meetings, including the participation of representatives from the Defense Ministries, to discuss the future of the mission and functions of the instruments and components of the Inter-American defense system, including the Inter-American Defense Board.
7. It is deemed appropriate that specialized national bodies, in accordance with the laws of each State and fully respecting the sovereign will of each one, expand regional initiatives to conduct humanitarian assistance exercises, in support of the relevant authorities.
8. Security and defense are the responsibility of the States and society as a whole; therefore, they reaffirm the importance of political leadership, and the training of civilians and military personnel in these matters, as the case may be, promoting cooperation to that end.
They support to the permanent development of professional, civilian and military capacities in the national entities responsible for defense and security.
9. They intend to continue to extend the application of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, through the doctrine, training and operational procedures as applicable to the Armed Forces and/or Security Forces.
10. Defense and security challenges, as well as the changing reality of our times, require an ongoing assessment of instruments and mechanisms of appropriate cooperation among States.
11. The Conference of Defense Ministers should take into consideration priority issues of regional agendas that are of interest to the defense sectors, from a comprehensive point of view, following a cooperative and complementary approach, taking into account the importance of the multidimensional nature of security for some States.
12. Accept and agree to the proposal of the “Mechanism of exchange of information on capacities in support of natural disasters”, presented by the Rapporteur of the Working Group which may be eventually adopted.

In this respect the Ministries of Defense will submit the proposal for the consideration of the responsible national authorities of each State with primary competence in the matter. Countries' participation will be voluntary in compliance with their own legal system.

Likewise, ask the Pro-Tempore Secretariat to make this matter known and to submit it for consideration through the relevant channels of other organizations at hemispheric, regional, sub-regional levels, which have competence over matters of natural disasters.¹

13. They recognize the work towards stabilization, reconstruction, promotion and protection of human rights carried out by the States of the Hemisphere contributing to Peacekeeping Operations, particularly in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and their sustained commitment to the success of such Mission.
14. To continue working within the sphere of CDMA in the exchange of experiences and lessons learned in the Peacekeeping Operations in order to optimize the participation of military and police contingents, and civilian experts from the American countries.
15. They recognize the important contribution of women to peace and security and in promoting the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence, as well as the protection of children. Also, the relevance of actions for the protection of civilians fostering peacebuilding.
16. The commitment of the CDMA Member States to encourage additional UN Peacekeeping deployments and to make the efforts they consider necessary to improve their capacity and voluntary contribution participation in Peacekeeping Operations according to UN standards and procedures.
17. They agreed to organize a Workshop on “Analysis, Diagnosis and Proposals of the Gender Policies for the Area of Defense and its relation to Peacekeeping Operations”, considering that this may contribute to improving the mechanisms for the incorporation of women thereto.
18. They consider the need to deepen the discussion on the IT threats to the security and defense of the member states which might affect the critical infrastructure and the information assets so as to establish cooperation and coordination mechanisms as regards IT security.
19. In the spirit of the peaceful nature of the nations of the hemisphere, we express the willingness to promote peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic.
20. We acknowledge the importance of AG/DEC.70(XLII-0/12) wherein it was decided to continue examining “The Question of the Malvinas Islands” until a definitive settlement has been reached, noting that this matter is of enduring hemispheric concern.²³⁴⁵

¹ In the absence of consensus, this paragraph was decided by voting with the following result: Positive votes: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, United States. Negative votes: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Suriname, Venezuela. Abstentions: Guyana, Uruguay

² Canada disagrees with the inclusion of this paragraph as it deals with a bilateral issue that does not belong in this forum. Canada believes that only the inhabitants of the Falkland Islands have the right to determine their own future.

³ The undersigned countries, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Guyana, Nicaragua, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela, participating in this plenary session, express their concern for the increased militarization of the South Atlantic and for the exercises being conducted in the Islas Malvinas, which include missile firing. Likewise, they reiterate their strong support to the legitimate rights of the Republic of Argentina in the dispute over the sovereignty of the Islas Malvinas, South Georgia Islands, and the South Sandwich Islands, and the surrounding maritime spaces, pursuant to what was expressed in the Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in its Special Communiqué of December 3, 2011.

21. To commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the creation of the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB), an entity of the Organization of American States, as well as the fiftieth anniversary of the Inter-American Defense College (IADC).
22. They express their satisfaction at the appointment of Peru as the host country for the Eleventh CDMA to be held in 2014, and welcome Jamaica's offer to host the Twelfth CDMA in 2016.
23. They express their gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Uruguay, through their National Defense Ministry, for their hospitality, support and efficient organization of the Tenth Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas.

⁴ Chile, Colombia and Mexico reiterate their strong support to the legitimate rights of the Republic of Argentina in the dispute over the sovereignty of the Islas Malvinas, South Georgia Islands, and the South Sandwich Islands, and the surrounding maritime spaces, pursuant to what was expressed in the Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in its Special Communiqué of December 3, 2011.

⁵ The United States does not consider this matter within the purview of this forum.