



XIII CONFERENCE OF DEFENSE
MINISTERS OF THE AMERICAS

DECLARATION OF CANCUN

CANCUN, QUINTANA ROO, MEXICO. OCTOBER 7-10, 2018



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The Ministers of Defense and Security or equivalent and Heads of Delegation participating in the Thirteenth Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas (XIII CDMA) assembled in the city of Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico, on October 7-10, 2018;

REAFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT to the unrestricted respect for the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations, the Charter of the Organization of American States, and the Inter-American Democratic Charter;

RECALLING OUR COMMITMENT to the Declaration of Security in the Americas;

GUIDED by the Williamsburg Principles approved by the First Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas in 1995;

KEEPING IN MIND that the CDMA's fundamental purpose is to promote reciprocal knowledge, its analysis, discussion, and exchange of ideas and experiences in the areas of defense and security;

ACKNOWLEDGING the importance of joint and combined cooperation among the Member States to face existing and new challenges in the areas of defense and security in our hemisphere;

CONSIDERING the Declarations adopted in the previous Conferences of Defense Ministers of the Americas, and especially the Declaration of the XII CDMA, held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, October 10-12, 2016;¹

RECALLING that during the XII CDMA, the Ministers of Defense agreed, in the "Declaration of Port-of-Spain," to establish five Ad-Hoc Working Groups for the 2017-2018 cycle of the Conference to discuss fundamental issues for the Hemisphere in matters of Defense and Security;²

GIVEN that the recommendations issued by the Ad-Hoc Working Groups are related to cooperation mechanisms in Search and Rescue, the paper on the Evolution of the Armed Forces in Defense and Security matters, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR), Environmental Protection and Climate Resilience, as well as the incorporation of Gender Perspective as a cross-cutting issue in defense policies.

DECLARE:

1. Their firm commitment to the role of democratic institutions as essential to establishing and consolidating an area of peace, security, and sustainable development in the Americas.

¹ The Government of the Republic of Nicaragua expresses its reserve to paragraphs in the present Declaration that contain references to the Declaration of the XII CDMA, approved in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago in 2016, which Nicaragua did not join, because it oversteps the nature and purpose of the Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas.

² Idem.



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2. Their unrestricted conviction of their responsibility to preserve peace among the nations of the Americas, uphold human rights in the hemisphere, and safeguard the security of the civilian population, in accordance with the rule of law.
3. Their renewed commitment to the promotion of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, in particular the principles and norms regulating the use of force by the defense and security forces when conducting law enforcement within each country, in accordance with domestic legislation.
4. Their interest to redouble efforts to strengthen institutional capacity and regional cooperation, through the promotion of reciprocal knowledge, and the exchange of defense and security experiences and ideas, including non-traditional areas, in accordance with domestic legislations.
5. Their desire to continue promoting cooperation between the Member States in support of voluntary participation in United Nations supported peace keeping operations.
6. Their continued determination to improve coordination between civil and military institutions before, during, and following the impact of disasters.
7. Their continued determination to improve coordination between CDMA Member States, before, during, and following the impact of disasters.
8. Their commitment to continue promoting the incorporation of the gender perspective as a cross-cutting issue in Member States' defense and security policies, underscoring the promotion of gender equality training, through strong leadership.
9. Their resolve to support environmental protection and climate resilience, as well as their intention to foster awareness amongst defense and security forces, in accordance with domestic legislation.
10. Their commendation of the progress in States Parties' implementation of the Convention for the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction as part of confidence and security building measures.



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11. Pursuant to Article 3.f of the CDMA regulations, their request that the OAS, through the Inter-American Defense Board, and in accordance with OAS General Assembly Resolutions, conduct the following activities:^{3 4 5}
 - i. Collect, share, and file lessons learned from HA/DR events in the region, and provide them to members of the CDMA on an annual basis.
 - ii. Maintain up-to-date databases on points of contact on HA/DR, and the Search and Rescue Data Compendium for use by countries requesting assistance.
 - iii. Collect read-outs from the military specialized conferences (Conference of American Armies, Inter-American Naval Conference, Conference of Commanders of American Air Forces/System of Cooperation between the American Air Forces) on HA/DR efforts to be shared at CDMA events.
 - iv. In coordination with the CDMA Pro Tempore Secretariat, facilitate a yearly exercise (table-top exercise or command post exercise) in the area of HA/DR.
12. That they take note of the attached conclusions and recommendations of the five Ad-Hoc Working Groups that met during the 2017-2018 CDMA cycle.
13. Their agreement to adopt Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) as a continuous follow-up theme in the pertinent working group to be established in each Conference.
14. Given the results of the Ad-Hoc Working Groups, to give the following mandates to the 2019-2020 XIV CDMA cycle:
 - i. To organize an Ad-Hoc Working Group that addresses the topics of “Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR)” and “Cooperation and Coordination on Search and Rescue,” allowing the exchange of experiences and best practices in regards to the participation of Defense and Security Forces in environmental protection and climate resilience, while thanking the Dominican Republic for its offer to host this working group in 2019.

³ The Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia ratifies its RESERVE to point 11 of the Declaration of Cancun, since it considers that the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB), in its role of observer, lacks the attribution to fulfill activities in the Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas. It also considers that the CDMA's nature establishes that "**Other organizations may be admitted only as observers**" which will not have a right to voice nor vote, and that may not be signatories of commitments, recommendations, resolutions, proceedings or any other official document of the Conference; even more since the Inter-American Defense Board, as an entity of the Organization of American States only has the responsibility of keeping the institutional Memory of the Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas.

⁴ Nicaragua expresses its reserve to the content of paragraph 11, which establishes activities that overstep CMDA's character as a political forum and the exclusive purpose of promoting the exchange of ideas and experiences in defense and security. CDMA lacks the authority of establishing coordination and operational mechanisms.

⁵ The Oriental Republic of Uruguay presents its reserve to paragraph 11 in the same terms expressed by the Plurianational State of Bolivia.



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- ii. The organization of an Ad-Hoc Working Group that continues covering the topic of the “Evolving role of the Armed Forces in Defense and Security” that includes cyber-security as a tool for the security and defense of the hemisphere; thanking the United States of America for its offer to host this working group in 2019.
 - iii. To continue with the Ad-Hoc Working Group in regards to the Inclusion of Gender Perspective as a cross-cutting issue in the Defense and Security Policies in the hemisphere, with the purpose of reaching gender equality and eradicating any kind of discrimination based on gender in the Defense and Security Forces; while thanking the Republic of Panama for its offer to host this working group during the second semester of 2019.
15. To reiterate their commitment to participate in the Ad-Hoc Working Groups to be conducted in the 2019-2020 cycle, to reach agreements that allow better cooperation and coordination among member countries, with the end to contribute to the success of the XIV CDMA.
 16. That they warmly announce the designation of the Republic of Chile as the host country of the XIV CDMA, in the 2019-2020 cycle, and accept the offer of the Federative Republic of Brazil to host the XV CDMA in the 2021-2022 cycle.
 17. To express their gratitude to the Government and the people of Mexico, as well as the authorities of the city of Cancun, Quintana Roo, for their hospitality and support in organizing the XIII CDMA.