

Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas
Third Meeting of the Working Group, November 17th 2008
Chair's Summary Report

Background

At the 8th CDMA in Banff, September 2-6, 2008, Ministers declared:

- 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. (*Paragraph 26*)

and,

- 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). (*Paragraph 27*)

Overview

The third meeting of the Working Group of the Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas (CDMA) was held on Monday, November 17th in Washington, D.C. Although hosted by Canada, in its capacity as the Chair, the meeting was held at the Organization of American States (OAS) building. At the VIII CDMA held in September, Member States created the Working Group to examine the modalities of accepting the offer from the OAS General Secretary to have his secretariat assist with the institutional memory of the Conference.

The purpose of the third meeting was to consider the proposed recommendations on the possible way forward, as well as a draft resolution for the OAS General Assembly in April 2009.

Eighteen CDMA countries were represented at the third Working Group meeting which achieved consensus on the language for the proposed recommendations and the draft OAS General Assembly Resolution. The consensus text was approved ad referendum Argentina and Nicaragua, pending consultations in capitals.

Report

The intent of the third meeting was to find consensus on draft recommendations and an OAS resolution to the General Assembly. The Vice-Chair of the Working Group, Mr. Marco Valverde of Bolivia, replaced the Working Group Chair, Major-General Mike Ward, who was unable to attend.

The Working Group first considered the draft recommendations to the CDMA Ministers (Annex A). Paragraph 2, which outlined the manner by which the IADB could provide assistance with CDMA institutional memory, was central to the Working group discussions. At issue was the wording of how the relationship with the IADB should be structured, including language that specifically mentions the Board's statutes, as well as the types of tasks the IADB would undertake for the CDMA. The Working Group agreed upon language that suitably described the proposed relationship with the IADB, as well as a short list of tasks the IADB could undertake on its behalf.

The Working Group also removed reference in Paragraph 1 to the provision of conference services. This issue is instead addressed in Paragraph 4 as part of the recommendation that CDMA Ministers consider in the future, the possibility of further cooperation with the OAS by seeking additional support to the CDMA in conference services.

The Working Group then considered the draft resolution to the OAS General Assembly. A final version of the draft resolution is included at Annex B. The only substantive changes occurred in the operational section, Paragraph 5, and they reflected the language agreed upon during the discussions on the draft recommendations. Specifically, the paragraph requests the OAS Secretary General to entrust the IADB with the responsibility of hosting the institutional memory of the CDMA, in accordance with its statutes, within existing financial and personnel resources.

Representatives from Argentina and Nicaragua indicated that their instructions did not permit them to join consensus at that time, pending further consideration in capitals.

The documents were therefore agreed upon by consensus ad referendum Argentina and Nicaragua. These nations are continuing consultations in capital with a view to possibly joining consensus, or providing the rationale for their reservation by December 1, 2008.

Next Steps

As outlined in the Banff Declaration, the Working Group's mandate is to return to the CDMA Ministers with proposed recommendations on the way ahead by December 2008. As Chair of the Working Group, the Canadian Minister of National Defence will report to his counterparts on the group's activities and include the proposed recommendations and draft OAS resolution for the approval of CDMA Ministers.

Annex A
Working Group Recommendations to CDMA Ministers

(Approved ad referendum Argentina and Nicaragua)

In carrying out its mandate established in the Declaration of Banff, to assess the modalities of Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas (CDMA) cooperation with the Organization of American States (OAS), including the Inter American Defence Board (IADB), the Working Group submits to the Ministers for their consideration, the following recommendations:

- 1) To express appreciation to the Secretary General of the OAS for the offer to host the institutional memory of the Conference;
- 2) To accept this offer to host the CDMA institutional memory, which is defined by the Working Group as the documentary history, including the CDMA website and archival services such as document registration and classification, distribution and safekeeping. For that purpose, the IADB will be charged with this task in accordance with its Statutes, within existing financial and personnel resources;
- 3) In this regard, to endorse the draft Resolution contained in Annex B, which would subsequently be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly of the OAS;
- 4) To consider in the future, the possibility of expanding cooperation with the OAS by seeking additional support to the CDMA in conference services,
- 5) To authorize the Pro Tempore Secretariat, on behalf of the CDMA, to communicate with the General Secretariat of the OAS on its resolutions regarding the modalities of cooperation, and to inform the CDMA Ministers of the results no later than April, 2009.

Annex B
Draft Resolution of the OAS General Assembly

(Approved ad referendum Argentina and Nicaragua)

“SUPPORT FOR THE CONFERENCE OF DEFENCE MINISTERS OF THE AMERICAS IN HOSTING ITS INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY”

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

RECOGNIZING the Williamsburg Principles agreed to by all Member States of the Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas;

RECALLING the Declaration of Banff adopted at the VIII Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas, 2008, whereby the Defence Ministers of the Americas decided to explore areas of support to immediately strengthen the institutional memory of the CDMA, and to create a Working Group to assess by December 2008 the modalities of CDMA cooperation with the OAS, including the Inter American Defence Board (IADB);

RECALLING that, in 2006, the General Assembly established the IADB as an entity of the Organization, and adopted the Statutes of the IADB, which, inter alia, define its legal and institutional relationship with the OAS;

NOTING the importance that Member States of the CDMA attach to the institutional memory of the Conference, which is defined as the documentary history, the CDMA website and archival services, such as document registration and classification, distribution and safekeeping,

RESOLVES:

1. To request the Secretary General of the Organization of American States to entrust to the Inter American Defence Board the responsibility of hosting the institutional memory of the Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas, in accordance with its Statutes, within existing financial and personnel resources.