

September 23, 2008

Colleagues:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution to a productive and successful Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas (CDMA) 2008. Building on the momentum of the Conference, we have a distinct opportunity to establish the CDMA as a key element of the Inter-American system.

Through the Declaration of Banff, CDMA Ministers solidified their commitment to strengthening the institutional memory of the CDMA, and agreed to consider the offer by the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) to host the institutional memory of the Conference. In paragraph 27 of the Declaration, Ministers agreed to create a Working Group “to assess by December 2008 the modalities of cooperation with the OAS, including the Inter-American Defence Board (IADB).”

It is therefore my sincere pleasure to invite you to send a representative to the inaugural meeting of the Working Group, to take place at the Embassy of Canada in Washington at 11h00 on 29 September 2008. Considering that all CDMA nations are represented in Washington, we chose this central location to ensure inclusive participation. At this initial meeting, the Working Group will develop an agenda and work-plan, in preparation for a substantive meeting to take place in mid-October. In addition, an expert from the OAS General Secretariat will be invited to describe the support provided by the OAS to other key hemispheric Ministerial conferences.

Notably, the Working Group is mandated to address only those issues relevant to the establishment of a durable relationship between the CDMA and the OAS, in order to enhance the institutional memory of the CDMA. As Ministers reaffirmed through the Declaration of Banff, “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.”

Attached, please find the four basic documents of the Working Group:

- i) The Declaration of Banff;
- ii) The Regulations of the Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas;
- iii) The letter sent by His Excellency José Miguel Insulza Salinas, Secretary General of the Organization of American States to the Chair of VIII CDMA, The Honourable Peter MacKay; and
- iv) A copy of Secretary General Insulza’s remarks at VIII CDMA in Banff.

As you are aware, CDMA Ministers have mandated that the Working Group complete its task by the end of the current calendar year, which is an ambitious but achievable deadline. I have every confidence that, working in the same spirit of cooperation that we

enjoyed in Banff, we will be able to deliver concrete recommendations for approval by Ministers. Should any questions arise as we prepare for the inaugural meeting of the Working Group, please contact Julia Aceti at the Department of National Defence Headquarters at 613-945-1320 or Aceti.JR@forces.gc.ca.

I look forward to meeting you again in Washington as we strive to continue the progress and collaboration established at CDMA 2008 in Banff.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Ward
Major-General
Director General International Security Policy for the Canadian Forces
Chairman of the CDMA Working Group

Enclosures: 4

cc: Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States