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***Strengthening Hemispheric Efforts in the Americas and Caribbean to Address and Counter Violent Extremism that is Conducive to Terrorism***

**Remarks by Brian Quigley, Jr., Deputy Executive Secretary, Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE)**

*New York, 13 December 2018*

It is my honor to be here today to address you on behalf of the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) on this important occasion and I would like to thank the Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee for organizing this timely and necessary Special Meeting.

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The OAS has been instrumental in building a regional framework for the effective implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism in the Hemisphere, ensuring cohesiveness between universal and regional instruments, specifically Security Council resolutions 1373, 2178, 2322 and 2396, as well as the Madrid Guiding Principles, to support Member States' efforts in complying with their obligations under these resolutions.

For its part, OAS Member States, during CICTE's 18<sup>th</sup> Regular Period of Sessions held in May of this year, adopted the Declaration on "Strengthening Hemispheric Efforts to Address and Counter Violent Extremism that is Conducive to Terrorism" to express their concern over the acute and growing threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, as well as by those who perpetrate, organize, incite or facilitate terrorist acts and use their violent extremist ideology to promote radicalization that leads to terrorism when they return to their countries of origin or to third countries.

OAS Member States renewed their commitment to implement their obligations under UN Security Council resolution 2396 and the need for the CICTE Secretariat to take the necessary steps to expand its technical assistance to prevent and combat terrorism, including capacity building to prevent the movement of terrorists through air, land and sea borders; to counter the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes; and to investigate the drivers of violent extremism.

To that end, CICTE's programs seek to adopt and incorporate the Madrid Guiding Principles. In alignment with the Guiding Principle 15, CICTE's Passenger Facilitation, Identification, and Security program builds the capacity of Member States to facilitate the identification and safe passage of travelers in the Americas and to strengthen security measures for issuing and checking travel documents and I.D.s. The Major Events program, in cooperation with UNICRI, seeks to establish and promote a standing mechanism for cooperation among OAS Member States for planning and protecting "soft

targets” and contributes to the development of strategies and effective tools for preventing terrorist attacks before, during, and after large-scale events.

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A regional and integrated approach is now more necessary than ever as the only effective response to the threat posed by the growing phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and the potential for radicalization among vulnerable groups, including prison populations, in Latin America and the Caribbean. Many governments lack the capacity and resources to track those extremists returning home, and given that many of them may possess operational experience and ties to global extremists, this is a major area of concern for the region.

Member States must have the necessary legal instruments to strengthen international and regional cooperation and information sharing, adopt effective border controls and issue secure travel documents, expand criminal investigations and prosecutions to include the use of intelligence as admissible evidence and special investigation techniques and put in place appropriate mutual legal assistance and extradition mechanisms, with the principle of double criminality at the core of the judicial system to avoid safe havens for those who commit terrorist acts. The role of regional organizations should be instrumental in supporting national, sub-regional and regional efforts to adopt counter-terrorism strategies as well as tackling the linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime.

Law enforcement is a powerful instrument, but it cannot be the only tool. Member States must also develop ways to reach individuals vulnerable to radicalization and violent extremism, as well as support the reintegration of de-radicalized persons convicted of terrorist acts, promoting alternatives based on education and dialogue.

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In closing, we are grateful for the opportunity to speak here today. Fora such as this are useful for regional institutions to exchange information, discuss gaps, and identify effective practices. We look forward to the outcome of today’s Special Meeting and a future addendum to the Madrid Guiding Principles.