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Before the Senate caucus on International Narcotics Control

“U.S. – Caribbean Security Cooperation”
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Thank you, Chairman Feinstein, Co-Chairman Grassley, and members of the Caucus. I am honored to appear before you today to provide an overview of the current security situation in the Dominican Republic and of our cooperation with the United States, in particular through the regional efforts of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI).

Illicit drug trafficking in the Western Hemisphere has had a severe impact on the Dominican Republic, and it would not be an exaggeration to declare it our foremost security concern. According to US data, 3% of cocaine reaching its territory has transited Hispaniola¹. I would like to draw your attention to the use of the term “Hispaniola”. The security challenges we face are interconnected and nowhere is this more evident than in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, given the threats posed by an extremely porous border and the very limited capabilities available to both countries to address jointly the illicit transit and trafficking that take place across it. I can only speak here for the government of the Dominican Republic, but bear in mind that security and welfare in the DR cannot be tackled effectively with disregard for the plight of our closest neighbor.

The fact that the US has embraced the premise of joint responsibility in its approach to the control of the illicit drug trade in the region is a step in the right direction. The CBSI initiative is proof of the work that can and should be done on a cooperative basis, beyond the fruitful bilateral cooperation that has long existed in the case of the Dominican Republic and the US.

We have implemented strategic and operational plans with tangible successes in interdiction, albeit at a cost to the level of social investment needed to confront challenges inherent to a middle-income country. Despite the overall positive impact of collaboration, what is included and funded through CBSI or bilateral cooperation is but a small fraction of the investment made by the Dominican Republic in security.

I will first provide an overview of the achievements cataloged by our law enforcement services over the last two years, followed by a brief update on regional cooperation from a Dominican perspective. Finally, I will outline some of the outstanding needs and requirements our agencies have identified for the months and years ahead.

Dominican Republic and the international drug trade

¹ International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, March 3, 2011.

The Dominican Republic is a transit country for illicit drugs originating in South America for markets in North America and Europe. The country has not been exempt from the increase in regional traffic, including that of new synthetic drugs and other controlled substances. This has been evident in the higher number of seizures carried out successfully by the Dominican National Directorate for the Control of Drugs (DNCD), which, as well as cocaine, heroin, crack, and cannabis, included oxycodone, ephedrine and pseudo-ephedrine en route to Central America and Mexico to be processed for the manufacture of methamphetamines².

Some methods employed by the traffickers have remained fairly constant, although successes in aerial interdiction have led to the virtual elimination of drops throughout the whole country. Beyond the improvement of aircraft detection capabilities, a key aspect of this effort has been the dismantling of organized networks that coordinated the deliveries in improvised or clandestine runways. The collective efforts of the DNCD, the Armed Forces and the National Police were crucial for the success of these initiatives, in particular to overcome technological limitations across the board. The use of effective methods of aerial interdiction in the form of helicopters with night-time detection capabilities and eight Super Tucano patrol aircraft have shown that adequate and up-to-date equipment is nonetheless imperative to make a real impact on the illicit trade.

The current situation is that the considerable decrease in the misuse of the air space for drug trafficking activities has resulted in redoubled efforts by traffickers to use maritime methods such as go-fast boats, privately-owned fishing and recreational vessels, and cargo containers.

International drug trafficking organizations increasingly pay their local partners in narcotics rather than in cash, provoking a rise in the domestic drug-abuse problem. Our prevalence rate for the use of cocaine and cannabis is still relatively low by regional standards. A survey sponsored by the National Drugs Council in 2011 placed them at 1.1% and 2.3%, respectively, in the population between 12 and 65. UNODC 2008 figures were much lower at 0.3% for both cocaine and cannabis³. Although both these measurements have large margins of error, there is no doubt that certainly growth is to be expected due to this relatively new, for our country, modality of payment in kind. Our authorities are exploring new avenues to prevent domestic drug use without detriment to the focus on interdiction.

Legislative framework for the fight against trafficking

The new Dominican Constitution of 2010 mandates the reform of government institutions and agencies to modernize the State. Accordingly, Congress is in the process of crafting the new laws needed to enable this transformation, which will encompass the judicial system and many law enforcement agencies, including the National Police.

Some of the laws currently in place to enable the authorities to combat trafficking are:

² According to UNODC, in August 2009 authorities in the Dominican Republic intercepted more than 409,000 pseudo-ephedrine tablets in a shipment en route to Guatemala and originating in Bangladesh.

³ "World Drug Report 2011". UNODC.

- Law 50-88, on “Drugs and Controlled Substances”, created the DNCD, organism in charge of the prevention and persecution of the consumption, distribution and trafficking of drugs and controlled substances throughout the national territory. Its board, formed by a representative of the Presidency, the Armed Forces or Police, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Catholic Church, designs policies to combat trafficking.
- Law 26-91, on “Campaigns, courses, programs to educate about drugs and the rehabilitation of addicts to narcotics and controlled substances”.
- Law 72-02, on “Money Laundering Proceeds of Illicit Traffic in Drugs and Controlled Substances”, repeals the Law 55-02 and amends the laws 50-88 and 87-01, as well as the decrees 288-96 and 235-97, establishing which activities are considered within the definition of money laundering and creating the mechanisms and instruments necessary for the prevention and detection of this criminal activity. The law was amended in 2011 to mandate the division of seized assets between the National Police (10%), the Attorney General’s Office, DNCD, and National Drugs Council (each 25%), and NGOs working on drug consumption control (15%).
- Law 96-04, on “The Institutionalization of the National Police”, repeals the law 6141 of 1962, and refers to the general principles, organization, structure, statutes, functions, attributions and disciplinary regime of the force.
- Law 188-11, on “Airport Security and Civil Aviation”, to enhance the capabilities of specialized agents focusing on the prevention of illicit activity in these environments.

Several Presidential decrees have created additional mechanisms to supplement the institutions in place, including decrees 19-03 and 571-05 relating to the administration of goods seized from illicit drug-related activities.

In addition, the National Drugs Council implemented a five-year “National Anti-narcotics Plan” from 2000 to 2005, and is currently implementing a four-year plan from 2008 to 2012.

Country efforts in interdiction and prevention

As I have already stated, the GODR has undertaken concrete measures to combat drug trafficking. Already in 2009, the country ranked 18th in the world in terms of the number of seizures of cocaine (0.6% of the world total)⁴. The incorporation of the eight Super Tucano aircraft, purchased from Brazil through a US\$93.7m loan provided by the Brazilian Development Bank, has constituted a decisive factor in the 90% reduction of air drops achieved in 2010. An overall improvement in capabilities has impacted on the significant increase in seizures through other means, despite the already-noted challenges now posed by the maritime routes increasingly used by the traffickers.

⁴ “World Drug Report 2011”. UNODC.

White House Office of National Drug Control Policy figures, published recently by TIME Magazine, claim that in 2008 around 73 metric tons of cocaine passed through Dominican territory, but that by 2010 the figure had dropped to 13 tons.

Ten fast boats have been incorporated for the surveillance of our coasts. However, our law enforcement officials have warned that we lack enough capacity to cover the entire maritime territory under our jurisdiction.

The Dominican government signed a contract with Israel for the purchase of a new radar system. However, budgetary constraints have already caused severe delays in the project.

Another successful initiative has been the increased control by the anti-narcotics authorities of the distribution of the fuel provided to small planes used in the agriculture sector. An adequate control diminishes the opportunities for traffickers to refuel similar aircraft for the purpose of performing illegal journeys.

Some other specific recent advances cited by law enforcement agencies in terms of counter-narcotics operations are:

- The introduction in 2010 of a 3-dimensional Military Radar System with a Control Center to patrol airspace in terms of all the commercial aircraft flying over the Dominican Republic.
- The creation of two new operational units (a Strategic Directorate and an Intelligence Division) and the upgrade of regional facilities to improve the capabilities of the DNCD.
- Purchase of new land transport vehicles to address mobility challenges in the activities of counter-narcotics agents throughout the country.
- Purchase of ancillary equipment to enhance capabilities to operate the OH-58 helicopter in nocturnal operations.
- The National Treasury has installed an internal audit unit within DNCD to oversee administrative processes to increase transparency in the management of seized goods.
- New premises for the international liaison offices, including the Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) of the US government, and new equipment for the Chemicals Division. Canada, the United Kingdom and other EU countries also have a physical presence within DNCD offices.
- Polygraph testing has been instituted as an additional mechanism to ensure the probity of agents who have access to intelligence on sensitive areas of anti-narcotics and financial transparency.
- Overhaul and refit of Tactical Reaction Unit of DNCD and K-9 Canine Unit at Las Américas International Airport. Over 300 operations were carried out by the K-9 Unit in 2011.
- The number of available agents for operations carried out by DNCD increased by 341 in 2010. This also allowed for the creation of new operations units in the areas of Guerra and Sabana Grande de Boyá.

- Implementation of an incentives program with monetary disbursements for drug seizures and bonuses of up to the equivalent of 10 minimum wages for agents who have gained merit in the course of their duties each month.
- DNCD awareness campaigns geared towards addressing local drug-demand reduction targeting local communities. Participants in preventive programs, including sporting festivals, exceed 70,000 persons throughout the country during 2011.
- In 2008, the National Drugs Council established the Dominican Drugs Observatory with the aim of collecting and sharing with local and international partners pertinent and current data on the problem of illicit drugs and related crimes.
- Improvement in the mechanisms for reception and intelligence analysis of complaints and reports from the public. These can now be made online and anonymously. The DNCD received 1,829 reports from the public in 2010, and 1,055 in 2011. During 2011, 755 complaints received in relation to micro-trafficking activities resulted in over 500 arrests. The DNCD website is also becoming a useful tool to receive complaints, with about 120 each month out of 50,000 visitors.

Included below are statistics provided by the DNCD on seizures of drugs and goods, as well as arrests related to drug-related illicit activities for the years 2010 and 2011. These are the result of over 23,000 operations carried out each year by law enforcement agencies.

Drug Seizures	2010	2011
Cocaine (kg)	4,526.9	6,714.7
Crack (grams)	12,919.3	9,870.2
Heroin (kg)	30.4	42
Cannabis (kg)	658.9	844.6
Cannabis plants (units)	67	15,305

Seizures of goods	2010	2011
Vehicles	2,137	2,334
Weapons	422	485

In 2011, the DNCD was able to seize approximately 48% more cocaine than in the previous year. Only in the month December of last year, joint efforts by law enforcement agencies succeeded in intercepting four large shipments over a two-week period totaling over 1.3 tons of cocaine.

In 2010, other assets seized by the Financial Investigative Unit of the DNCD totaled US\$97m, including apartments, houses, farms, and commercial premises. By the end of 2011, under the new money laundering legislation, NGOs working on drug use prevention had already received approximately US\$3.6m as their share of seized funds.

In both 2010 and 2011, there were approximately 25,000 drug-related arrests by the DNCD. In 2011, nearly 3,000 detentions resulted from special operations by the Anti-narcotics Directorate of the National Police (DICAN).

Citizen safety and the National Democratic Security Plan

The Dominican Republic has been affected by the rising insecurity seen throughout the region, at a high social cost and with disproportionate impact on Dominican youth. According to the Dominican Office for National Statistics (ONE), the murder rate in the country increased from around 14% in 2002 to over 24% in 2009. The 2,474 murders that took place in the year 2010 represented a 5% increase from the previous year. Homicide is the leading cause of death amongst young people (age 12-35). In 2008, 1,622 young people were murdered, compared to 1,388 in 2006. This represented, respectively, 67% and 63% of total homicides in the country. The percentage of homicides attributed to criminal activities, including drugs, increased from 36% in 2006 to over 40% by 2008. In fact, it is estimated that violence related to drugs was the second-highest cause behind the total homicide rate.

In the 18 years leading up to 2006, the Dominican Republic prosecuted 59,418 persons for drug-related crimes. By 2009, drug-related arrests already totaled 24,000 per year (a daily average of 65), including 17,000 classed as young offenders. National Police statistics suggest that 15% of offenses by minors fall under the category of drug-related.

Already by 2006, 18% of those in the penitentiary system were being held for crimes related to drugs, and this figure increased to 30% in 2009. Of these, 71% were aged 18-35. According to a penitentiary census carried out by the Attorney General's Office, of the total of women held in 2006, 52% had been found guilty of drug crimes⁵.

Overall, between 1995 and 2005, the country saw an annual increase of around 22% in the number of drug-related arrests. Although official statistics often fail to record the links between larceny and the drug trade, authorities have become aware that a significant number of car thefts and robberies are in some way associated with the consumption or trafficking of drugs⁶.

A large proportion of homicides are carried out with firearms: 65% in 2010⁷ and 77.8% in 2011⁸. The rate of firearm deaths stood at 16.3 in 2010 (up from 15.8 per 100,000 in 2009)⁹. Although a presidential decree of 2006 prohibited the import of firearms for private trading, the number of contraband weapons entering the country continues to rise. A major entry point is the porous border with Haiti, as is also the case with large shipments of illicit drugs, but there is also evidence that arms reach the Dominican Republic from the US. The ease of access to weapons by criminal elements has led to an increase in gun fights with police forces, with 101 agents killed in the line of duty between January and October of 2011. Only approximately 10,000 police officials are engaged in patrolling nationwide.

⁵ Cabral, M. and Cabral, E. "Factores de riesgo y violencia juvenil en la República Dominicana". June, 2010. www.uasd.edu.do. The authors have collated data from the National Institute of Forensic Pathology, the Attorney General's Office, the National Police and the DNCD.

⁶ "La Seguridad Ciudadana en la República Dominicana: Procesos y contextos socioeconómicos". ONE. 2010.

⁷ "Dominicana en cifras 2011". ONE.

⁸ Dominican National Institute of Forensic Sciences.

⁹ Regional System of Standardized Indicators in Peaceful Coexistence and Citizen Security. <http://www.seguridadregion.com>

An important element of the response of our government in the face of rising citizen insecurity was the launch in 2005 of the National Democratic Security Plan (PSD), designed by the Ministry of Interior and Police, the National Police and the Office of the Attorney General, with the support of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, John Jay College, and the University of Florida. This was complemented in 2006 by the creation of a National Council on Citizen Security, integrated by the Minister of Interior and Police, the Minister of the Armed Forces, the Attorney General, the Chief of Police, the Director of National Investigations Directorate (DNI), the Director of the DNCD and the President's Adviser on Drug Control. The PSD contemplates the reform and modernization of the National Police, the implementation of security programs at the neighborhood and municipal level, protection for the victims of violence (i.e. the RELEVIC programs), weapons control programs, and the control of alcohol consumption program.

The police reforms are mainly geared to further training, supported by better facilities and the implementation of a new preventative mode aimed at developing deeper links with local communities, called "Police Proximity Program". It complements efforts already made as part of the Safe Neighborhoods program in place since 2005, and forms the building blocks for the project to fully develop a "Community Police" force, a pilot program launched late last year with the participation of 70 officers.

Safe Neighborhoods, a crucial part of the Democratic Security Plan, has sought to decrease and prevent crime through both increased patrols of better-equipped police and a comprehensive approach at improving the life of the community. This involves an intensive cross-sectoral coordination led by the Ministry of Interior - in collaboration with the Ministries of Education, Health, Youth, and Social Protection -, the police and community leaders. Beyond the increase in police presence, the program consists of infrastructure improvements (road entries/exits and public recreational areas), more community policing, neighborhood security improvements (such as street lights), new classrooms, literacy and civil education programs, and cultural and athletic workshops for young people run by neighborhood organizations. The key target areas are the drug trade, gang violence, and the control of weapons.

After an evaluation revealed impressive initial results, despite somewhat lukewarm early support from the international community, the program has been extended to 113 communities in Santo Domingo and 31 in the city of Santiago, the second largest in the country. Assessments of the program have shown that the areas where the program is in place have higher rates of police approval and lower homicide figures.

As part of the goal of improving police accountability, the Chief of Police routinely suspends and transfers to the appropriate channels in the judicial system any agent suspected of wrongdoing. As part of the security plan, the National Police has also increased efforts to improve the training of agents through a series of talks, workshops and longer courses. The National Police Institute of Human Dignity often holds workshops on topics such as security and justice, human rights, the use of force and firearms, treatment of suspects and victim assistance, in particular in cases of gender and intra-family violence. For instance, 925 police officers and members of the military received training between September and November, 2010. In July, 2011, 105 officers of the Central Anti-narcotic Directorate of the National Police received diplomas after concluding five

basic training courses focusing on prevention and detection but also on ethics and discipline. Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior and Police published in August 2011 a manual on “Human Rights for Police Officers”, prepared with the support of the United Nations Development Program. By October of 2011, 524 new agents graduated from the police academy and joined regular patrol duty.

Training of law enforcement officials involved in drug control

In 2010, the DNCD’s Drug Control Academy carried out 102 seminars for the Armed Forces, government and non-government representatives, totaling 9,501 participants. Also, 56 courses and trainings within the DNCD gave additional training to 2,029 persons involved in anti-narcotics efforts.

In the course of 2011, the DNCD Academy visited different institutions to organize 110 talks and seminars which reached an audience of 8,431 persons from the Armed Forces, other government agencies and NGOs. A total of 65 courses held at the DNCD provided further training for 4,050 agents and members of the public.

Detection and prosecution of officials involved in illicit drug-related activities

The government has redoubled efforts to detect and purge from law enforcement agencies any official involved in drug trafficking. In some cases, entire units were identified as accomplices to trafficking organizations, dismissed and/or arrested. The DNCD and National Police both established internal affairs units to investigate officers accused of corruption and abuse of authority.

Three different events which took place in October 2011 highlight these efforts: the arrest by the DNCD of army sergeant Julio José José with 15 kilograms of cocaine; the detention of police agent Gerson Patricio de la Rosa, who was attempting to enter La Victoria penitentiary with two pounds of cannabis; and the arrest of two agents and seven airport security employees who were reportedly attempting to help an Italian citizen, Claudio Morlandi, to depart for France with 43 packages of cocaine.

In 2010, 134 DNCD agents were relieved of duties for misconduct in the course of their work. In 2011, 86 officers left the armed forces after investigations for suspected misconduct. Law enforcement agencies regularly hand over agents arrested for alleged participation in drug-related crimes to the judicial system for investigation and prosecution.

Improvements in the institutional capacity of law enforcement agencies and the judicial system

Our government recognizes the importance of increasing the efforts to integrate the work of law enforcement bodies, the judicial system, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Information-sharing and border control agreements have been signed between several agencies, including: DNCD, DNI, and National Police and the Armed Forces, in particular the task forces for border (CESFRONT), airport (CESA), and port (CESEP) security, and the inter-agency task force

“DEPROSER” (Defend, Protect and Serve). These agencies also work closely with the Customs General Directorate, the National Drugs Council, and the Executive’s adviser on drug control.

The Constitution of 2010 officially created the National Council for Security and Defense. This inter-institutional body is tasked with advising the President on security issues, as well as developing strategies and policies in that regard. Most importantly, it serves as a coordinating entity to streamline the assessment of security requirements, channel funds and other cooperation, and enable an efficient communication with international partners.

Beyond the work of law enforcement agencies to counter the illicit drug trade, our government has undertaken efforts to tackle related crimes of money laundering and the trafficking of persons. The Dominican Republic recognizes the importance and impact on the success of anti-narcotics efforts of anti-corruption measures at all levels of government. A notable step forward in the fight against corruption is the design and implementation of the Anti-corruption Participatory Initiative (IPAC) with the support of international partners, and our upcoming participation in the Open Government initiative with regional allies such as the US and Brazil.

An increasing number of drug-related cases are being brought to justice. It is worth highlighting the recent joint operations by Dominican and Puerto Rican anti-narcotics units to apprehend Puerto Rican drug dealer José Figueroa Agosto and extradite his accomplices. Members of his trafficking ring were variously convicted to five, twelve, and fifteen years of imprisonment in the Dominican Republic. Others are still on trial.

Presence in the country of foreign organized crime and trafficking groups

Recent public declarations by President Fernandez have confirmed that the authorities have detected cells of Mexican criminal factions in the Northern region of the Dominican Republic, specifically of the Sinaloa Cartel. The recent murders of a Spanish citizen, three Colombians and a Venezuelan are apparently linked to this trafficking organization, which might be operating in Santiago, La Vega and Jarabacoa.

The president of the DNCD, Rolando Rosado Mateo, has indicated that the Sinaloa Cartel might be receiving assistance from Dominican criminals groups in the Cibao region to acquire chemicals used for the fabrication of narcotics. This information was obtained through the capture of Luis Fernando Bertolucci Castillo, a Mexican trafficker who claimed that the Sinaloa Cartel is seeking to create a route to Europe using the Dominican Republic. After his detention and interrogation he was extradited to the US.

DR-US Cooperation

There is a significant and positive level of bilateral cooperation between the Dominican Republic and the US on, but of course not limited to, security matters.

In 2010, the total level of the foreign assistance program implemented by the US in the Dominican Republic reached US\$49m, across different areas and including some region-wide

programs under USAID. The amount requested for 2012 is US\$36.4m¹⁰. This does not reflect the complementary funds that will now reach the Dominican Republic through CBSI for security matters, which have increased year-on-year. Any decrease in other types of assistance with a positive impact on anti-narcotics efforts, for instance technical training courses and institutional support for relevant agencies, could have a profound negative effect on our country's goal to make a timely stand the fight against the drug trade.

Beyond the work done through our embassies and Foreign Ministries, several agreements are in place with diverse security and law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. The Dominican Republic works closely with the Drug Enforcement Administration, but also has links and strong working relationships with the Department of Justice, US Customs and Border Protection, the United States Southern Command, among others. These relationships allow for the sort of cooperation, for example, that enabled the training of Dominican pilots on night operations using helicopters in Texas, makes possible joint counter-narcotics operations with the U.S. Coast Guard, and facilitates the police training received from the State Department. To name but two examples of other types of cooperation over 2011, the US donated eight jeeps and nine cars to the DNCD, as well as computer and audiovisual equipment for their K-9 unit.

In terms of judicial cooperation, an extradition treaty has been in place between the Dominican Republic and the United States since 1909. This treaty established the procedural rules that apply to requisitions to deliver up to justice any person or fugitive of justice that has committed any extraditable crime and who is present in the territory of a signatory party. In terms of local legislation, Law 278-98 modified Law 489-69 on extraditions, explicitly adding in its fourth article a provision for including to the list of extraditable crimes: "the illicit trafficking of drugs and controlled substances and the laundering of goods resulting from that activity..."

According to DNCD figures, in 2010 the Dominican Republic extradited 24 Dominicans to the US. In 2011 the figure was 15. The overall number of drug-related deportations for the last few years can be seen below:

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
14	19	20	33	31

Source: "Dominicana en cifras 2011". ONE.

A total of 18 foreigners were deported from the country in 2011, including three US citizens.

Participation in multilateral security initiatives and information-sharing

At a regional level, our participation in the Cooperating Nations Information Exchange System (CNIES) has improved capabilities through better information sharing with the US and other Caribbean countries on suspected trafficking activities.

The Dominican Republic has also signed bilateral agreements with countries such as Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Russia, Peru, Costa Rica, and Canada. In addition, inter institutional

¹⁰ Congressional Budget Justification. Foreign Operations. FY 2012

agreements are in place with police forces in countries in Central America, Mexico, Belgium, Canada, Holland, Germany, and Western Africa (Togo, Ghana, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Gambia). The country is also part of the Great Caribbean Agreement (or TROIKA), with Mexico and Colombia.

The Dominican Republic, as an associate member of SICA, has taken an active interest in cooperation with its partners in Central America as they develop strategies to jointly improve capacities in the battle against drug trafficking and organized crime.

Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)

As you are aware, the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative was launched in 2010 as the culmination of negotiations to deepen regional security cooperation. An important precursor to this effort was the Pact of Santo Domingo, signed during the “Ministerial Conference on Illicit Drug Trafficking, Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism as Challenges for Security and Development in the Caribbean” in February 2009 by 16 Caribbean nations.

Under the principle of shared responsibility, the US is working with CARICOM and the Dominican Republic to reduce illicit trafficking and increase public safety and security, thus helping to promote social justice and improve welfare throughout the region. The Dominican Republic has actively participated in the different working groups on maritime security, information sharing, law enforcement strengthening, and crime prevention that form the backbone of the initiative and has been a consistent advocate of its significance for the region.

Under CBSI, Dominican Republic has received funding for juvenile justice sector reform, anti-corruption and institutional strengthening programs, community-based policing, youth development and employment programs.

The total CBSI appropriation for the year 2010 was US\$45m¹¹. The US Administration’s FY2011 request for the CBSI was for US\$79 million, of which it US\$73m were granted. Of this requested assistance, 43% was to be destined to specifically towards counternarcotics efforts and another 23% in military assistance to improve air and maritime security. For FY2012, the Administration is requesting \$73 million for the CBSI, with about 24% for counternarcotics and 33% in military assistance focused on improving maritime security. Even allowing for the smaller geographic area of the Caribbean with respect to Central and South America, the significantly lower level of funding compared to past successful initiatives such as Plan Mérida and Plan Colombia creates the risk of slowing down actions to counteract the new routes in the region as trafficking is displaced from other areas by effective interdiction efforts.

We recognize and laud the successes and continued progress of CBSI, of which our country has been a militant supporter. The Dominican Republic believes that it is possible to continue to deepen regional cooperation through a comprehensive approach without detriment to an enhanced bilateral support that to identify more targeted and direct actions to tackle current needs. The most recent joint statement resulting from the Security Cooperation Dialogue that took place in November of 2011 in Bahamas reaffirmed the commitment of the members of the

¹¹ Latin America and the Caribbean: Illicit Drug Trafficking and U.S. Counterdrug Programs. CRS. May 2011.

initiative to: harmonize policy and legislation to implement information sharing mechanisms on a region-wide basis, develop a common strategy to coordinate maritime interdiction efforts, harmonize legislation to allow for the seizure of assets, and establish regional repositories of best practices in the areas of crime prevention and social justice, among other measures.

Further challenges and future requirements

The Dominican Republic believes it is crucial to continue talks to develop a Regional Control Center, as part of the work to create the technological platforms indispensable to meet the level of challenges and threats we currently face. Also, more radar capability is needed to continue to improve air control efforts, in particular along the border with Haiti.

There are other requirements along a wide range of areas, including communications equipment, IT platforms, hardware and software for intelligence work, fast boats, border control mechanisms, and naval radars. I am submitting along with this document a simplified list of some of the requirements highlighted by our authorities as necessary to aid efforts to develop the kind of integrated platform needed to provide a global view of events taking place in our territory and share this information in real time with our regional allies. The document reflects the needs of one law enforcement agency, the DNCD, and is intended as an illustration of requirements rather than an exhaustive catalogue.

One of our most important ports – the Puerto Multimodal Caucedo – is already taking part in the Container Security Initiative (CSI). But as we continue to close the air routes through our country, it is of crucial importance to enhance capacity at our ports and along our coasts to improve interdiction. Port operators throughout the country are increasing efforts to strengthen security controls and obtain relevant certifications. Equally problematic is the situation along the border with Haiti, which creates problems with the illegal transit of drugs and weapons and the smuggling and trafficking of people and goods. We believe the international community must not waiver or fail in its responsibility towards Haiti in helping it along the path to development, starting with greater resources to guarantee security within its borders, and therefore along our shared frontier, and for its people.

Our country remains deeply concerned about the impact of the accelerated flow of persons deported from the US to the Dominican Republic after committing drug-related crimes, given our limited capabilities to handle their reinsertion into society. We lack the resources to rehabilitate and support the reinsertion into society of this large contingent of persons who often have few or no links with the country and whose criminal experience is intrinsically linked to the country where many lived their whole adult lives. Furthermore, there are serious concerns with the frequent failure of US authorities to fully disclose the criminal records of the deportees. More than half of these have served jail sentences for drug-related crimes. In 2011, up to 4,000 persons were returned to the Dominican Republic, an increase from the 3,100 deported in 2010. We are extremely interested in starting a dialogue on the most effective ways to prevent recidivism, especially as this is often done through criminal links with the US.

Social and economic ills are surely factors in the rising insecurity in the region, but it is beyond doubt that the effect of drug trafficking is also a great contributor to the problem. We firmly

believe that our alliance with the US is *sine qua non* to confront this insecurity. As in any partnership, responsibility should fall equally on all members. We believe the time has come for the US to finally become this equal partner to the DR in the fight against drug trafficking: the US is still the main market for controlled substances while the DR is primarily a transit point. I would like to reiterate here our willingness and ability to actively contribute to the efforts to create regional centers of excellence in different fields. In more general terms, our country is well disposed and has the capacity to continue to promote the development of initiatives in the region and to serve as interlocutors to other neighboring countries.

As Assistant Secretary of State William Brownfield has already stated, before Congress and to the press, the cartels being chased out of Mexico and Central America have cast their eyes over the Caribbean, and accordingly the Dominican Republic, as they seek alternative bases of operation. Therefore, strong support from our partners, such as the US, is of paramount importance at this stage to enable the Dominican Republic and its regional associates to prevent new routes and criminal dynamics from taking root across our countries.

We hope that you can continue to be a valuable partner to us in these endeavors.