

## Recommendation 4

*The Government of Canada should continue to work with other states in developing an international approach to combatting the drug trade. In particular, Canada should reinforce OAS efforts to develop regional cooperation on this issue, and should also support the proposal for a scientific study of aerial spraying under the auspices of either the OAS or the United Nations.*

Canada is internationally recognized for its leadership in addressing the drug problem from a balanced and comprehensive perspective. Canada currently contributes \$1.5 million to the counter-narcotics efforts of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), and \$700,000 to the drug control agency of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (known by the Spanish acronym CICAD). We also assist developing countries that are grappling with the drug problem through the longstanding bilateral assistance programs of the Department of National Defence (DND), CIDA, the RCMP, Canada Customs and others.

Canada played a leading role in shaping the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM), a peer group assessment mechanism set up to monitor the development of national and regional drug control strategies. The MEM was developed by the 34 member countries of CICAD in response to a mandate given by leaders at the 1998 Santiago Summit of the Americas. The MEM consists of a questionnaire addressing indicators that provide information on all aspects of a country's drug control policies and efforts, including legislation, drug prevention, treatment, firearms control, and money laundering, and provides an objective process for evaluating national and hemispheric efforts in the areas of drug control and demand reduction. The MEM was also conceived to end the finger-pointing between producer, transit and consumer countries that had marked hemispheric relations on illicit drugs, and to offset the negative impact of the bilateral U.S. certification process of judging whether countries are cooperating on drug issues. The MEM will not replace the certification process, which is based on U.S. domestic law, but it will serve as an example of how multilateral cooperation can achieve the same aim of improving drug control policies. Canada strongly supports the MEM as a way of enhancing domestic and regional coordination and cooperation efforts against illicit drugs in the hemisphere.

The first MEM evaluation round was conducted in 2000, based on 1999 data. The information was assessed by a Governmental Experts Group (GEG) consisting of 34 experts (one per state), and released in national reports and one overall report in February 2001. This first hemispheric report concluded that there is a need to develop information gathering capabilities in all countries to assess the magnitude of the problem. It acknowledged that there has been a rise in consumption, a drop in the average age of