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INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TRAFFIC IN DRUGS

Letter dated 16 October 1986 from the Permanent Representative
of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that at the invitation of the President of Mexico, Miguel de la Madrid, a Regional Meeting of Ministers of Justice and Attorneys-General from Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru, United States of America and Venezuela took place in the city of Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, from 8 to 10 October 1986.

This meeting constituted yet another international co-operative effort by different countries of our continent in the campaign against drug trafficking and drug dependency which I feel should be brought to the attention of the international community.

Consequently, I enclose the text of the Puerto Vallarta Declaration (see annex), a document issued at this important meeting. I should be grateful if you would have it circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 100.

(Signed) Mario MOYA-PALENCIA
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative
of Mexico to the United Nations

ANNEX

Puerto Vallarta Declaration

The Ministers of Justice and Attorneys-General, or their representatives, from Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru, the United States of America and Venezuela met in the city of Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, in the Republic of Mexico, from 8 to 10 October 1986. They were invited by Mexico, bearing in mind the nature of the problems being examined in each country and the advisability of ascertaining their points of view and of reaching agreement on action in the field, without prejudice to positions maintained by each country regarding their sovereign rights vis-à-vis any other country of the international community.

This meeting, held following the invitation extended by Miguel de la Madrid, President of Mexico, to the heads of State and Government of various countries of the Americas, was designated as the Regional Meeting of Ministers of Justice and Attorneys-General. The representatives expressed their fullest appreciation for the initiative of the President of Mexico and their gratitude for the hospitality of the Mexican Government.

At this meeting a wide-ranging examination of the problems of drug trafficking and drug dependency in the nations represented took place, with the specific aim of learning more about the characteristics of these phenomena, and thereby strengthening national and multinational means for coping with them. With this aim in mind, the participants presented their views as they saw fit, without being bound by a rigid agenda or seeking the adoption of different resolutions representing the positions of each nation. This working procedure facilitated the conduct of the deliberations in an atmosphere of complete candour and confidence.

This meeting does not take the place of other forums for considering and agreeing on common actions. Therefore, the participants reaffirm the continuing validity of other mechanisms or systems for investigating and combating drug trafficking and drug dependency, and the agreements reached under them.

The Puerto Vallarta meeting adequately fulfilled its objectives and made it possible for the Governments represented to carry out an effective examination of these problems. Emphasis was placed on the good will that prevailed, respect for the solutions adopted by each country in exercise of its sovereignty and the need to promote systems of reciprocal co-operation in keeping with relevant international and national norms and in accordance with the characteristics of these problems.

In view of the foregoing, the Governments represented at the Regional Meeting of Ministers of Justice and Attorneys-General deemed it appropriate to make the following declarations by consensus:

1. The firm political will to continue vigorously combating the crimes that endanger the health of the peoples represented at the meeting, and the abiding determination to prevent and alleviate phenomena of drug dependency, are reiterated. The seriousness and complexity of these problems, which cause severe damage to society and its institutions, were clearly brought out. The need to take action at the different stages of offences against health from the planning and financing of drug trafficking activities to the consumption of narcotics and psychotropic substances, was stressed.

2. Emphasis was placed on the inescapable need to ascertain the factors that give rise to drug trafficking and drug dependency in an objective and thorough manner. It was stated that effectively combating these problems entails a determined and vigorous effort to achieve social, economic and cultural development, without neglecting police and judicial measures, bearing in mind that factors of this kind have a decisive influence on the appearance and development of drug trafficking and drug dependency.

3. The advisability of promoting the legitimate co-ordination of tasks between the countries of the region was recognized, bearing in mind that drug trafficking is a crime that has international consequences. To that end, the participating countries should take measures, as they see fit, conducive to an effective supply of information and appropriate assistance in penal matters, within their respective constitutional and legal frameworks.

4. Bearing in mind the current features of crimes against the health of individuals, families, and particularly of children and young people, note was taken of the legislative and institutional reforms being undertaken by various countries, and of the advisability of updating or modernizing, in the terms considered appropriate by each country, national laws and the means and instruments for their application.

5. It was noted that several countries have limited financial resources with which to combat these crimes and remedy their causes. Accordingly, the desirability of encouraging the use of resources seized or confiscated from individuals or corporations involved to support national and international campaigns against drug trafficking and drug dependency was pointed out. Every participant would study how and under what conditions that approach could be promoted.

6. Emphasis was placed on the desirability of improving both technical training and equipment in national campaigns against drug trafficking and drug dependency. The participants in the meeting therefore expressed their willingness to provide each other with assistance, in accordance with the provisions of their national legislation.

7. Information was given about the noteworthy efforts being made by many countries in the field of prevention and cure of drug dependency. In that context, observations were made about the need to support a broadly based mobilization of the community in the participating countries, with respect for their norms and traditions, and in the way they decide on internally, in order to create an

awareness of the gravity of the problems examined, and of the need to prevent and eradicate them through the concerted action of the different sectors of society. In activities of this kind, an awareness of these problems in the family, educational and working environments plays a particularly important role.

8. Some participants put forward the possibility of creating a working group or committee in charge of planning measures aimed at fostering great regional co-operation with a view to effectively reducing the production, trafficking and illicit consumption of narcotics and psychotropic substances. That possibility was left open, and its implementation should be decided upon as soon as possible at a future meeting of Ministers of Justice and Attorneys-General from the area represented at the Puerto Vallarta meeting.

9. The usefulness of meetings such as the one held in Puerto Vallarta was also pointed out. These meetings encourage an open and effective exchange of viewpoints in an atmosphere of friendship, harmony and mutual respect. Suggestions were therefore voiced about holding future meetings of this nature, to be convened by interested countries after prior consultations with the other nations represented at Puerto Vallarta and, where appropriate, with other countries of the Americas whose attendance is deemed useful, in accordance with the nature of the problems of drug trafficking and drug dependency in those countries.

10. The participants expressed their appreciation of the effort made by all in attending the Puerto Vallarta meeting, presenting the views they considered pertinent and reaffirming their united and determined participation in a common front against drug trafficking and drug dependency.

Puerto Vallarta,
10 October 1986
