



NOTE NO 64/2006

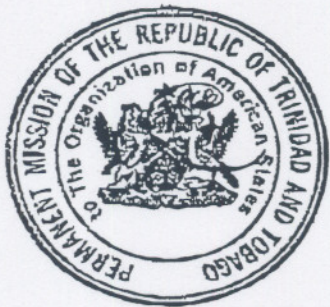
The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the Organization of American States presents its compliments to the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States, and has the honour to advise that the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, through the Ministry of the Attorney General, has formally agreed to host the next *Meeting of the Working Group of Experts on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and Extradition of the Meeting of Ministers of Justice or of Ministers or Attorneys General of the Americas (REMJA Working Group of Experts on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and Extradition)* in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, during the period 05 to 06 April 2006.

In this regard, the Permanent Mission wishes to recall that this decision is in conformity with the recommendation of the REMJA Working Group of Experts on Mutual Legal Assistance, at its meeting held in Washington DC from 09 to 10 November 2005, whereby it was unanimously agreed that the next meeting of the Working Group would be held in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Permanent Mission has the further honour to advise that, on behalf of the Ministry of the Attorney General, it will be forwarding to all Permanent Missions accredited to the Organization of American States, a letter issued by the Ministry of the

Attorney General to all members of the Working Group on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and Extradition, in their respective languages, extending an invitation to participate in the aforementioned meeting. A copy of that letter is enclosed herewith for the Secretariat's records, in light of the Secretariat's undertaking to provide support for the REMJA process.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the Organization of American States avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States the assurances of its highest consideration.



WASHINGTON, DC  
2006 MARCH 10



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Port of Spain, Wednesday, March 8th, 2006

Dear colleagues:

**Re: REMJA WORKING GROUP OF EXPERTS ON MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN CRIMINAL MATTERS MEETING TO BE HELD IN PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FROM THE 5-6 APRIL 2006.**

At the 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit of the Americas, which took place in Quebec City in April 2001, the Heads of States and Governments of the Americas, on the recommendation of our Working Group (WG), proposed in the Action Plan of the Summit to:

"Create, within the OAS, an Internet information exchange network joining the proper legal authorities in extradition and mutual legal assistance, in order to facilitate the direct and regular communications between these authorities and identify the common problems which arise in the treatment of questions and particular cases deserving an attention and a collective settlement".

The REMJA III meeting established a broad mandate: to improve mutual legal assistance between countries of the Americas.

Our Working Group has evolved significantly while trying to fulfill the tasks presented by the subsequent REMJA meetings. Since the REMJA V held at the OAS headquarters in Washington DC. from April 28-30 2004, all the Member States of the OAS have formed an integral part of the Working Group and this group is composed of expert-lawyers.

Thus this small Working Group, comprised originally of representatives from four countries and having only one project, that being the Web site, is now made up of experts from various institutions related to Mutual Legal Assistance and Extradition from 34 Member States of the OAS with quite a full agenda. The REMJA VI, which will soon take place, awaits our recommendations.

At the meeting of the REMJA Working Group of experts on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and extradition which was held on September 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004 in Washington (D.C.), the experts requested the coordinator to present a revitalization project of the WG on MLA, with the aim of not only seeing this Group grow and evolve but also of ensuring its continuity.

To date, with the support of the OAS we are able to maintain a website with nearly 5000 legal documents relating to MLA and extradition. We continue to provide a confidential page with documents of interest, results of surveys, an interactive forum and a list of all proper Authorities of the Americas with their co-ordinates. We take part in an exponential way in a "secret" email system, and we are exploring the possibility of creating a model law for eventually improving domestic laws and updating the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters. We are also working on a plan for extradition in order to assist with the development of better practices as they relate to the processes involved in extradition as a mechanism for curtailing trans-national crime. The experts have asked that these facilities be consolidated so that they may evolve and be effective.

The WG is seen in the OAS as a mechanism that works well. However, as mentioned by the Heads of States in Mar del Plata in their Action Plan and by the experts during the meetings, because of its evolution, the WG should no longer be without a permanent budget and fixed committees to which it reports and should be in a position to support the proper authorities in the Americas when necessary in their approach to mutual legal assistance.

Furthermore, to realize the benefits of consolidation, a single structure should manage and approve and/or provide the general principles of co-operation and mutual legal assistance and extradition in the OAS. At the moment MLA is scattered among a multitude of groups.

We thus propose that the first day of the meeting in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago concentrate on defining what is institutionalization and preparing for the REMJA VI, a solid project in order to guarantee an effective mutual legal assistance system in the Americas.

Secondly, we propose as an agenda to answer in a more specific way to the expectations raised by the REMJA V and to report accordingly. A Draft Agenda is attached for your attention.

Our meeting will therefore take place in Port of Spain at the Ministry of the Attorney General Building, 23-27 St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad on Wednesday April 5<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 am to 5:00 p.m. and Thursday April 6<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Interpretation services will be available in Spanish and English.

For logistical purposes, could you please send, by email or fax, the names of the members of your delegation who will be attending, before noon on Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup> 2006 to:

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If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the following:

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Yours Sincerely,

*David West*

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David West  
Head Central Authority