Session Title: OF46: The OAS Cyber Security Program - Strengthening the cybersecurity capacity of the Americas

Date: Wednesday, December 7th, 2016

Time: From 17:00h to 18:00h

Session Organizer: Belisario Contreras, Manager, Cybersecurity Program, Organization of American States

Overview: The Cybersecurity Program of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) has been building the cybersecurity capabilities of the members of the Organization of American States (OAS), to prevent and respond to cyber incidents for over a decade, and has built a reputation of trust and competence among member states for the execution of relevant and effective capacity building initiatives both nationally and regionally. This open forum focused on presenting the work of the OAS Cybersecurity Program and its accomplishments 2015-2016 and resources developed that are publicly available.

List of speakers and their institutional affiliations: (1) Belisario Contreras, Manager, Cybersecurity Program, Organization of American States; (2) Edson Lanza, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Organization of American States; and (3) Barbara Marchiori de Assis, Cybersecurity Project Officer, Organization of American States

Key issues raised:

The OAS Cybersecurity Program briefly described its initiatives (i) to increase access to knowledge and information on cyber threats and risks; (ii) to enhance technical and policy capacity of governments and critical infrastructure operators to detect cyber threats, respond to cyber incidents, and combat cybercrime; and (iii) to promote more robust, effective and timely information-sharing, cooperation and coordination among cybersecurity stakeholders at the national, regional and international level. To accomplish these goals, the OAS Cybersecurity Program assists countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in the development of national cybersecurity strategies, organizes cybersecurity exercises, assists in the development of national Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs), organizes tailored trainings and workshops according to countries' challenges and needs, raises awareness and conducts research on cybersecurity issues, as well as promotes CSIRTs regional integration and information sharing through its Hemispheric Platform, the CSIRTAmericas.org. For more information, *see* Strengthening the Cybersecurity Capacity in the Americas: the OAS Cybersecurity Program.

Speakers also stressed the importance of protecting the cyberspace from cyber threats, while preserving Internet openness and fundamental values, such as privacy, freedom of speech, and the free flow of information. The adoption of a multi-stakeholder approach in the formulation of cybersecurity strategies was also highlighted by the speakers and the audience, in order to ensure not only the accountability and transparency of the process, but also a proportionated and balanced cybersecurity policymaking. The methodology employed to assist member states in the formulation of national cybersecurity strategies is a learning and ongoing process, and the Cybersecurity Program is opened to receive comments and recommendations from different sectors. The OAS Cybersecurity Program also emphasized the importance of partnerships with different stakeholders to execute its projects, and invited the stakeholders present at the open forum to contact the Program and discuss potential ways of collaboration.

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