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**OUTGOING REMARKS**  
**MANUEL GONZALEZ**  
**PLENARY MEETING XXXVI, VIRGIN ISLANDS**

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**OUTGOING REMARKS, PLENARY MEETING XXXVI, VIRGIN ISLANDS**

My Dear Colleagues:

On behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela I would like to thank you for giving me and my country this extremely valuable opportunity to serve this organization, which from what I have witnessed over the past twelve months, is critical to the well being of the Caribbean Basin Region.

I feel very fortunate to have assumed the mantle of leadership of the CFATF after the hard work of Madame Chair de Lannooy and Chairman Bulgin who both took us through the, at times painful but, overall rewarding process of introspection and reform. Thanks to them my job was made that much easier and I am very grateful as we all should be of the high quality of their respective leadership.

I cannot forget to mention the critical role of the Steering Group which also experienced change in its structure and operations but which nevertheless has kept focused on the greater good of the organization by strengthening the governance and operations of the CFATF. We must therefore applaud their efforts and thank the current Members of the Steering Group for their dedication and hard work on behalf of our organization. In the same vein we should encourage them to even greater achievements and give them the due respect by implementing the decisions that they take which serve the best interest of this region.

One of the main concerns over the years has been the strength and level of commitment of the wider membership to the aims and aspirations of the CFATF based on the difficulties with paying the annual contributions in a timely fashion, and engagement in the essential affairs of the organization.

Over the past twelve months we have seen a significant shift in the psychology and the attitude of the membership, who have enthusiastically embraced the call for change buttressed by strong sanctions regimes to ensure sustainability.

These important moves away from the past are reflected in the extraordinary reduction in the level of arrears in annual contribution. Another important area in which this change of attitude is reflected is in the maturity of the discussions of the Mutual Evaluation Reports, as well as the Follow-up Reports; and the spirit of encouraging each other to aspire to the highest levels of compliance with the FATF Recommendations in a short time.

This maturity is also reflected in the enhanced knowledge and expertise on the technical requirements on the international AML/CFT standards shown by the delegations and also our contributions to the revision of the FATF Recommendations. For these achievements we must thank the Co Chairs of the Working Groups for their dedication and commitment to living up to the imperative that the region's voice must be factored into the global dialogue on the standards so that the global network is based on partnership and not imposition and exclusion.

This organization and all its members have committed this Region to full and effective partnership with the international community in protecting the global financial system from criminals and financiers of terrorism, as part of the global network consisting of the FATF and fellow FSRBs. Accordingly it is vital that we must not shirk from this responsibility to comply with all the FATF Recommendations.

In this regard I would like to congratulate the incoming Chairman, Cherno Jallow for the effective work that the CFATF ICRG has been doing in expediting the reform process in those CFATF Members that have met the FATF ICRG criteria and are to be reviewed in due course. The High Level Missions to Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, Suriname and Jamaica are testimony of the benefits that could accrue not only for these countries but also to the reputation and credibility of the CFATF as a whole.

I expect that similar results will occur with the High level Missions to Belize, Guyana and Dominica. The CFATF ICRG is a success story of which we should be very proud and I am sure our accomplishments will continue to grow.

Our successes also extend to the Heads of Financial Intelligence Units Forum, which over its ten year existence has contributed to strengthening the capacity of the region to take the profit out of crime by enhanced systems for regional and international cooperation, which has led to an increase in the number of money laundering prosecutions and the freezing and confiscation of criminal assets.

Our partnership with and the increasing numbers of our Members who are joining EGMONT with strong and enduring bonds of friendship; and the support from our traditional and growing donor partners are contributing to the training of law enforcement officials, financial investigators and analysts. All of which would not have been possible without the ongoing efforts of both the Heads of FIUs Forum and the Working Group on Accreditation and Training.

Technical Assistance and Training are vital to building and sustaining regional AML/CFT capacity to fight transnational organized crime and the financing of terrorism. The level of resources to do this effectively is significant and is growing as the criminal organizations grow in sophistication and the standards change to meet the ever changing challenges.

We in the Caribbean Basin Region cannot do this on our own and so we are ever grateful to the FATF Secretariat and in particular Richard Berkhout who we consider an important member of our family, the Group of Cooperating and Supporting Nations, where I am pleased to extend a special thank you to Marie Elizabeth for her support during this year working together. I would also like to thank the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations, the European Union, CARIFORUM and CARICOM for their ongoing human and financial support in furtherance of the important work of the CFATF.

The CFATF has changed and has done so in a very short time frame and in a significant fashion and I am certain that these changes will be entrenched and sustainable. There is no turning back to the old ways of the past. We will continue to press forward to even greater accomplishments and more importantly even higher levels of compliance during the Fourth Round of Assessments.

I would not like to leave however without emphasizing that these achievements and this new organizational attitude would not have been possible without our engine room, the hard work, dedicated and at times underappreciated staff at the Secretariat.

Despite the adversities, they have graciously kept the faith, performing their duties with focus and dedication, striving at all times to ensure that we feel proud of the face of the CFATF. So to Calvin, Dawne, Samantha, Alejandra, Julia and all the other Members of staff at the Secretariat I would like give special recognition and allow me thank you for all the hard work that you continue to do on our behalf and I wish you all the best for the future.

The past year, since the Plenary Meeting in Margarita Island has been an exciting, stimulating and immensely valuable experience. I have made new friends, whom I wish to keep for a lifetime and I have learnt a lot.

I would also like to highlight that the achievements made during my Presidency at the CFATF, during this year, I owe in large part to the friendship, guidance and good counsel of the incoming Chairman, Cherno Jallow in whose very capable and experienced hands I leave the CFATF.

Once again thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve this region and I wish you all the best and God's Richest Blessings.

Finally, thanks to all those who have been at the forefront, as well as those who have been behind the scenes, for making our mission possible.

Thank you.

MANUEL GONZALEZ  
**VENEZUELA-2012**