

# OAS

PEACE | SECURITY | DEMOCRACY | DEVELOPMENT



Organization of  
American States



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# Introduction

The Organization of American States (OAS) is the largest multilateral forum in the hemisphere and the only one in which all American states are members. It is the hub of debate on political affairs and democracy, human rights, multi-dimensional security, and integral development.

Because of the diversity and heterogeneity of its member countries, the OAS is a unique meeting space where all countries—no matter their size, geography, population, ideology, or level of development—can interact and reach consensuses that are then translated into actions to address the primary challenges facing the people of the Americas.

At the center of the OAS mission lies an unequivocal commitment to democracy, expressed in both its founding charter and in the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Through dialogue and collective action, the OAS has built on this base and works tirelessly to strengthen governance, protect and promote human rights, resolve conflicts, achieve peace and security, and address the complex problems caused by poverty and inequity.

All of these elements are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. They help ensure that democracy (which goes far beyond free and fair elections) is a value shared by governments and citizens alike, and they contribute to the collective commitment of all countries towards the promotion, consolidation, and defense of that democracy.

This collective commitment has been recognized in the Summit of the Americas process. The region's leaders have entrusted the OAS with a growing number of responsibilities aimed at supporting multiple efforts to achieve a shared vision and promote greater cooperation and understanding between the countries and peoples of the Americas.

This publication presents some of the work of the OAS which, as a whole, is aimed at ensuring a more democratic, secure, and prosperous hemisphere in which human rights are respected.



# Do the Summits of the Americas Matter?

by José Miguel Insulza

The Heads of State and Government of the Americas will be meeting in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on April 14 and 15 and, as always happens in the run-up to these events, there is a ramping up of talk on the current state of hemispheric relations. Many circumstances and perceptions have changed in these countries in recent years, and this has necessarily had an impact on said relations. Whereas the global economic crisis (the “great recession”<sup>1</sup>) began in the United States and made its way to Europe, where it still seems to be in full swing, the economies of the South, which have always been the protagonists of these crises and have been most hurt by them, have shown a surprising resistance this time around, partly because of sound management of their economies before and during the crisis and partly because of a sharp increase in their exports, especially to China and other Asian countries.

The growth rate of 5.9% in the economy of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2010<sup>2</sup> and of 4.3%<sup>3</sup> in 2011, when other countries and regions were still grappling with the crisis, has major economic and political consequences. At the same time, economic growth and effective poverty alleviation measures, such as conditional transfer and microcredit programs, made it possible in less than a decade to reduce the poverty rate from 43.9% in 2002 to 31.4% in 2010.<sup>4</sup> This is of course still a high rate, and middle-class growth generates new demand for education, health, housing, and jobs, which governments are not always in a

position to meet, especially given conditions of extreme inequality in the region.

However, the overall outcome of these changes is that Latin America and the Caribbean, with a per capita income of more than 10,000 dollars and clear signs of social progress, is no longer a poor region and is facing new and encouraging prospects. While some public figures and prominent publications refer to “the decade of Latin America,” there is a new assertiveness in these countries and a search for greater internal integration and a stronger international presence. At the same time, new global actors, especially in China and, to a lesser extent, India, are assuming a more active role in the region’s market, although the consequences of their presence affect countries in different ways. It is considered much more positive in the South (where they are buyers and investors) than in the North (where they tend to be competitors).

The distinct situations in the Hemisphere’s various regions have become more apparent. Although Mexico is increasing its growth, its proximity to the United States—and this is also true for Central America and the Caribbean—has meant that its integration processes are less dynamic (notwithstanding the interesting efforts made by the Mesoamerica Project). Conversely, in the South, regionalism has gained strength, as demonstrated by the increasing vitality of UNASUR, which must still however be reflected in more unified commercial and economic activity.

As concerns the countries of the North, their involvement in the region has been influenced by the priority attention they have been obliged to pay to the economic crisis and to international crises in other regions of the world. Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Iran, the European crisis, Egypt, and the “Arab

spring” have been just some of the priorities that the United States and its close allies have had to address during this period, thus diverting attention from the changes taking place in a region that, rhetoric aside, has never exhibited the necessary conflict situation to be considered a “crisis.” The humanitarian crisis still under way in Haiti has been the only real disruption in that trend, and that for a short period of time.

President Obama’s presence in Trinidad and Tobago two years ago was an overwhelming success. The climate appeared to have changed completely and the entire world was well disposed, including those countries seemingly most at odds with the United States. There were no recriminations or anti-US speeches, but rather great expectations generated by President Obama’s address, which seemed to pave the way toward a new era: “I want to create a policy with you, not for you.” That meant that there would be more consultation, more dialogue, and a common agenda.

It cannot be said that there has been a heavy-handed policy; nor can it be said that dialogue with the region and the interest shown in it have been fully adequate. Major decisions have been taken on energy issues, there has been close cooperation on social protection matters, pressure on Cuba has lessened, and trade agreements with Colombia and Panama have been approved (although with considerable delays). But decisions have been made on such topics as deportation (to which the Caribbean attaches great importance), immigration, and on arms trafficking—a major problem for Mexico and Central America. The US Congress has not even started to consider ratification of the respective convention, CIFTA.



On such an important matter as the overthrow of the Government of Honduras, the United States and Canada joined with all the other countries and collective action was taken, as also occurred in all cases of collective implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and in other crises. But beyond concrete results and President Obama's two trips to the region, the feeling is that there has been very little effective dialogue and scant readiness to take multilateral action.

None of this means, however, as concluded by some analysts in the North and the South, that hemispheric relations have lost their heft or importance. A large number of relevant topics still engage all countries of the region and are viewed in a generally positive light. Of course, the hemispheric agenda is characterized by frequent signs of discord, but on the whole it consists of constructive issues and common challenges.

There is ample room for hemispheric cooperation if all countries are willing to cooperate. The fact that the region has changed enormously in the last decade should generate new opportunities for cooperation, especially since the North and South recognize the importance of a set of common issues, which cannot be addressed in part by some regions but must be addressed by the hemisphere as a whole.

To do so, everyone has to agree that policies "for" others are no longer feasible. Common topics and shared values exist, but a truly multilateral approach is needed if they are to be dealt with successfully. The greatest risk to hemispheric relations does not lie in the creation of new regional bodies but in the failure of its own bodies to adapt to changing realities in the Americas. The hemisphere will not be homogeneous for a long time; rather, it will comprise a set of diverse realities, with the habitual problems caused by growth and the major challenges posed by poverty, violence, and inequality.

The Latin American and Caribbean region grew more in the last decade than in the previous two combined, and it is starting to open up to the rest of the world. At least two countries already rank as important middle powers and the entire region is more

independent and assertive than in the past, although this is more apparent in the south of the Hemisphere. The countries of Central America, the Caribbean, and South America need to have a healthy relationship with the countries of the North (one of which is the major world power), and this need is reciprocal since Canada and the United States are already benefiting from its ties with the hemisphere and stands to benefit much more. The greatest risk for hemispheric relations would be the unwillingness of some of its most important members to continue working jointly, not attempting to impose solutions to common problems but rather demonstrating a readiness to engage in dialogue in the context of new realities.

## II

The Americas now have approximately a billion people (935 million in 2010), about two thirds of whom live in Latin America and the Caribbean and one third in North America. However, the economic situation is the reverse: the United States and Canada account for more than three quarters of the hemisphere's GDP. Although the economic crisis and the growth of some emerging powers have had an impact on that figure, North America still represents 27% of the global economy . . . and will no doubt maintain that predominance for a long time. The United States is showing signs of recovery, with a projected growth rate of over 2% this year: in January 2012 it had the highest industrial production in recent months and the economy created 170,000 new jobs.

Three of the countries of the region (Canada, Mexico, and Brazil) are among the fifteen top trading partners with the United States. If the analysis is broadened to include 30 partners, five more countries of the region make the list (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela).<sup>5</sup> The fact that eight of the largest countries of the region rank

among the top US trading partners obliges us to recognize the region's importance for economic recovery in the United States. Three Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico), whose combined population is 70% of the region's, participate in the G20.

But the aggregate figure (imports and exports) tells only part of the story. The picture looks even brighter if we focus exclusively on exports from North America to the rest of the region. The eight countries mentioned above rank among the 30 top partners when ranked by exports from the United States. When the list is ranked by US imports, other countries appear, whose sales to the United States are higher than some Latin American countries but whose purchases are much lower. After Asia, Latin America is the largest US export market.

In short, neither the United States nor Canada needs to be concerned about a highly skewed balance of payments since Latin American countries rank among those that purchase most North American products, even though they have smaller populations than other countries generally known as the "strategic" partners. Suffice it to compare what countries like India, Russia, Pakistan, or Japan buy from the United States with what is bought by Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and Colombia. Of course, Mexico buys more North American products than China, and various other countries buy more products than India, with a population many times smaller. All of this points to a somewhat healthier and more important relationship than that between the countries of North America and other regions of the world.

These statements should be clarified by referring to the distinct behavior of the regions. Both South America and Central America have extremely important internal trade, as do the NAFTA countries. Mexico's export and import trade with the United States and Canada is much higher than the total of the rest of the region. The trade volume of Central America and the

Caribbean is also very high, although some countries have recently moved toward more interesting diversification. But this does not change the fact that all of Latin America's largest countries are among the top trading partners. Latin America and the Caribbean send 40% of their total exports to the United States and receive 30% of that country's exports.

As far as the advantages for Latin America and the Caribbean are concerned, their exports to the North are more than satisfactory and are buttressed by free trade agreements signed between many countries of the Americas and by the preferential treatment given Haiti. While commodities still figure prominently in the mix (see below), the amount of manufactured goods and services that Latin America and the Caribbean sell to the United States and Canada is much greater than that sold to any other region,<sup>6</sup> although it is smaller when compared to Latin American intraregional trade.

Trade in energy is also worthy of note. Canada, Mexico, and Venezuela, along with Saudi Arabia, are the largest oil suppliers to the United States.<sup>7</sup> But Colombia is the seventh, Brazil the ninth, and Ecuador the thirtieth. All of the countries of the region account for 53% of US oil imports. The United States and Canada produce most of the natural gas they use, but Trinidad and Tobago is the top foreign supplier.<sup>8</sup>

Expanding this analysis to other strategic resources, one third of the total amount of oil, gas, and strategic minerals the United States imports comes from Latin America and the Caribbean (with another 20% from Canada). This makes it even more noteworthy that, with the Latin American and Caribbean countries the largest suppliers of these commodities essential for North American production, the trade balance with them should be more favorable than with any other region of the world.

This mutual dependency of the markets of North, Central, and South America would be sufficient to consider the relationship a preeminent one, even more so if the area of strategic trade is taken into account. But there are also investments. In 2010, when it

was noticed that Latin America would be less affected by the crisis than any other region in the world, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in that region surged. Indeed, 26% of United States FDI of that year went to the region, raising Latin America and the Caribbean to an 18.5% of the US total foreign investment, the main recipient after Europe.<sup>9</sup> The total investment flow from North America (United States and Canada) to Latin America and the Caribbean in the last decade was a trillion dollars, almost 40% of the total amount received.

Clearly, the flow in the opposite direction is much smaller but still not insignificant. In 2010, for the first time, FDI in the United States from Latin America and the Caribbean reached 60 billion dollars, representing an increase of 24%. Total FDI in the United States from Mexico, 12.6 billion dollars, is greater than the total amount from China, India, and Taiwan the same year.<sup>10</sup>

It is not only economic factors and the enormous potential of a region with most of the world's natural resources that should propel the hemisphere toward unity. There is also a human factor that binds us together increasingly with each passing day. The region of the Americas, and especially Latin America and the Caribbean, is a region of immigrants, a region of people who emigrate in numbers greater than any other region of the world but who do so primarily within the Hemisphere. Most go to the United States, which receives approximately 80% of the region's total number of immigrants (other high-immigration countries are Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, and The Bahamas). Figures from the most recent US census show that over 50 million people of Latin American origin are living in the United States, which makes that country the third Latin American country in the world, after Brazil and Mexico. That number can only grow considering that Latin American births account for 25% of total births. The number of immigrants declined during the crisis but is still high, especially in view of the fact that the number of migrant workers of Latin American and Caribbean origin in Canada has also been rising in recent years.

## III

Common efforts over more than three decades have made the Americas one of the two democratic regions of the world, together with Europe. This statement may be challenged, but it is a fact today that 34 of the 35 independent states of the region have democratically elected governments and that the region is united from within by generally accepted rules of democratic governance and respect for human rights.

Admittedly, being a democratic country does not simply mean holding periodic, transparent, and competitive elections but having a government that functions democratically, with respect for the rule of law and the rights of all its citizens. That is why our countries signed the Inter-American Democratic Charter in 2001, a genuine program of the Democratic Republic that all countries have pledged to implement. The strong economic and social ties uniting the nations of the hemisphere find a parallel in the legal norms that they have jointly adhered to, primarily the OAS Charter and the 1948 American Treaty on Pacific Settlement, the 1969 American Convention on Human Rights, and many other instruments that make inter-American law one of the richest and most comprehensive in the world.

Last year marked the 10th anniversary of the adoption of our Inter-American Democratic Charter, with a renewed commitment by all countries to maintain it and to consolidate its implementation. During the numerous events held to commemorate the 10th anniversary, there was consensus on maintaining the text unchanged as well as on the need to search for appropriate ways to strengthen its implementation, especially through a broader definition of the "threats to or interruptions of the democratic order" referred to therein, a search for non-invasive means of evaluating democratic development in the countries, and the consolidation of preventive action to avoid such interruptions before they occur.

## IV

The economic, social, and political ties binding the hemisphere conjure up, over and above any specific concern or problem, the need for common action. As the Americas and the member countries develop and face new challenges, it is more than ever before essential for their Heads of State and Government to meet to address them. The Sixth Summit of the Americas is therefore necessary.

There is no doubt, despite the ongoing challenges facing the region, that significant progress has been made since United States President Bill Clinton convened the First Summit of the Americas, held in Miami in 1994. The impetus provided by that meeting and by subsequent meetings of the Heads of State and Government continues to play an important, though perhaps undervalued, role in the region's political affairs.

Indeed, many successful or ongoing inter-American initiatives were the outcome of Summit deliberations, even though they may not be widely known. Noteworthy among them are the following:

- As a community of nations, at the First Summit, the countries expressed their concern about the threat of terrorism and called for joint efforts to combat it. Subsequently, a series of specialized meetings were held on the fight against terrorism and culminated in the adoption of the "Commitment of Mar del Plata," which established the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) in the framework of the Organization of American States. CICTE continues to play an important role in promoting regional and international cooperation in the fight against terrorism.
- In 1998, the Santiago Summit laid the groundwork for the establishment of what would become an important instrument for defining the anti-drug strategy: the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM).<sup>11</sup> The multilateral, multidisciplinary

process carried out through the MEM constitutes an objective review that enables recommendations to be made to the member states on improving drug abuse control and trafficking and enhancing multilateral cooperation.

- The emphasis placed on trade at the 1994 Miami Summit was reiterated at the Second Summit of the Americas, held in Santiago, Chile, in 1998, at which formal negotiations were launched for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The negotiations went on for several years and, while they were never concluded, the climate they created led to an increase in the number of bilateral and regional free trade agreements (FTAs): only two existed in 1994,<sup>12</sup> and to date 75 have been signed, 64 of which are already in force.

- The Inter-American Democratic Charter, adopted by the OAS General Assembly at a special session in Lima, Peru, in 2001, responded to a mandate from the Third Summit of the Americas, in Quebec City, Canada. The Democratic Charter has become a valuable instrument for safeguarding and consolidating democracy in the region. Proposing and adopting it was major feat and, "despite its complexity, [it] has the great merit of having been adopted by consensus, without reservation, or footnotes."<sup>13</sup>

- More recently, at the 2009 Summit in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, the framework was established for the Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN) and the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA). Both initiatives are continuing to grow, which is a testament to their importance and impact. Many countries participate in them, and they receive support from various inter-American and international organizations of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG).<sup>14</sup>

All of these initiatives have been factors for change as they are directed toward finding solutions to problems that the leaders and citizens of the hemisphere are facing and grappling with.

## V

Although there have been significant advances, the region is still facing major challenges. Inequality remains a great cause of concern, even though poverty dropped by 15% between 2002 and 2011. Unequal access to education and technology contributes to the marginalization of broad sectors of the population. Crime and violence are pervasive in many countries, threatening public security and "impair[ing] the social, economic, and political development of their societies."<sup>15</sup> Transnational organized crime networks are a threat to good governance and social harmony and undermine the rule of law. Natural disasters seem to be on the rise, and their impact is also greater due to a series of climate conditions, as well as infrastructure, urbanization, and population density, among other factors.

Against this background of achievements and challenges, the theme selected for the Sixth Summit, "Connecting the Americas: Partners for Prosperity," has particular resonance for all countries of the hemisphere in the 21st century.

The Sixth Summit of the Americas will be the first to draw attention to joint mechanisms for physical integration and regional cooperation as a means of attaining higher levels of development and overcoming the challenges confronting the Hemisphere in the areas of poverty and inequality, citizen security, access to technology, and natural disasters.

The decision of the member states to focus their attention on these thematic areas is an implicit recognition that, despite obvious differences in size and economic development, these topics pose common challenges whose effects transcend borders. The topics are not new and are not the only challenges before us, but the context in which they are raised and their scale and implications demonstrate that their impact on economic development, democratic governance, and social stability in the Americas is increasingly profound.

Notwithstanding the advances we have made, poverty still affects a third of the men and women in the hemisphere, and rising inequality between countries, regions, and individuals is the main source of vulnerability in our region, the most unequal one in the world in terms of income distribution. Inequality levels, both real and perceived, along with inherent tensions, are detrimental to our democracies. The fact that less than 5% of the population makes more than 50% of the national income is not consistent with a democratic discourse."<sup>16</sup> Democracy and economic and social progress must move forward together if we are to fulfill this promise in the Americas. There are various social movements throughout the world that draw our attention to the question of inequality. Governments, for their own sake, must step forward to design and implement policies and programs that can provide greater opportunities and access to all citizens.

Given the strength exhibited by Latin America in response to the global financial crisis, there is great optimism that the region is on the right path and that the decade just recently started will be the "decade of the Americas," enabling consolidated democracies in the region to advance toward a more prosperous future. To achieve that promise, our vision of the future must be inclusive, with a clear commitment to social and economic equality and human rights and with the dedication and resolve to integrate traditionally marginalized and vulnerable groups into the marketplace of opportunities.

While the concept of partnerships is important in dealing with poverty and inequality, it is essential in addressing citizen security and in supporting efforts to combat the crime and violence that has risen alarmingly within and among our countries. *Latinobarómetro* surveys indicate that over one in three people were affected by violent crime in 2010. Of the 19,000 people surveyed in 2011, 29.6% said that the lack of security was the main problem besetting their countries, compared to 19.6% two years ago.<sup>17</sup>

The rise in crime and violence in the hemisphere—whether transnational or local in origin—threatens the physical safety of millions of people, jeopardizes individual freedoms and basic rights, hinders economic development, and undermines the very integrity of the state and of democratic institutions in many countries of the region. The challenge is multifaceted. Drug trafficking, money laundering, kidnapping, intellectual piracy, the activities of juvenile gangs, trafficking in persons, and arms smuggling are but part of the many manifestations of organized crime, which is viewed by citizens of the entire region as one of our most serious problems.

Our ministers responsible for public security have met several times in recent years to strengthen ties of cooperation and to find ways to address the growing threat of organized crime. Last year, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) adopted a new strategy to combat drug trafficking and drug addiction, thus strengthening the areas most conducive to shared responsibility. The Conference of Central American Presidents on Crime and the Third Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security, held in 2011, are the most recent examples of growing institutional cooperation, information exchange, and capacity building in the area.

Improving access to technology is an important step toward democratization, expanded opportunities, and the provision of tools to increase citizens' competitiveness and the capacity of governments to be closer to the people they serve. The idea of promoting connectivity and knowledge-based societies in the hemisphere arose for the first time a decade ago, at the Quebec City Summit in 2001, which proposed "the use of tele-health as a means to connect remote populations and to provide health services and information to under-served groups."<sup>18</sup>

Since then, great strides in technological innovation combined with efforts by governments, institutions, and private initiative have led to significant progress in various areas. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has made considerable advances in initiatives to support cyber-health and tele-medicine, thereby expanding access to quality health care. In the past ten years, the OAS Educational Portal of the Americas, in partnership with a consortium of universities, has provided a series of training, distance-education, and online courses, as well as scholarships, to thousands of people who otherwise would not have had access to these educational opportunities. Likewise, e-government programs in Latin America and the Caribbean (in which the OAS and other international organizations participate) have helped authorities be more accessible to the population and have enhanced the transparency and efficiency of services.

Given their pervasiveness and their impact, information and communication technologies (ICTs) are being called to play a greater role in national and regional development plans. Easy access is good for public policy, encourages better communication between governments and citizens and among citizens themselves, and provides communities with tools enabling them to improve their capacity to contribute to development, more robust democratic institutions, and social inclusion.

As regards natural disasters, since the last Summit, held in April 2009, the hemisphere has experienced more than 240 different types of disasters, including earthquakes, floods, droughts, landslides, hurricanes, and storms, affecting almost 23 million people and causing approximately 250,000 deaths, an estimated 95% of which resulted directly or indirectly from a single

catastrophic event.<sup>19</sup> The 7.0 magnitude earthquake in Haiti in January 2010 and the Central American floods in 2011 took a high toll in human lives and caused incalculable damage to physical infrastructure, in addition to putting the capacity of international humanitarian efforts to the test. The convocation of a Special Summit of Central American leaders in October 2011 specifically to consider the subject of natural disasters is a clear indication that this is a priority for states and that joint regional and multilateral efforts must be made to complement each country's national capacities.<sup>20</sup> Countries generally coincide in recognizing that most of these challenges are consequence of a global warming that they cannot control, but feel that their common action can improve prevention and mitigation capabilities.

These recent events underscore the need for a comprehensive inter-American strategy to promote innovation and partnerships, with a focus on closer coordination. Improvements in early-warning systems, monitoring capabilities, disaster planning and preparedness, adequate zoning and building codes, and citizen awareness will contribute to all aspects of disaster prevention, mitigation, and recovery. National governments, international institutions, humanitarian organizations, and companies have acquired a great deal of know-how as a result of their disaster-response experiences.

Advantage must be taken of this broad database of knowledge when designing regional plans. Considering the greater focus today on natural disaster prevention, mitigation, and recovery, the time is ripe for countries to take a look at some existing instruments, including the Inter-American Convention to Facilitate Disaster Assistance,<sup>21</sup> the only convention of its kind in the world, which establishes clear procedures for the "direction, control, coordination, and supervision of the assistance" within an affected territory.

### Conclusion

Summits have not only proven to be a forum for discussion, at the highest level, of challenges confronting the region; they have also been a powerful precursor in the promotion of integrating mechanisms, with visionary goals.

The deliberations of the Heads of State and Government of the Americas have always been in the vanguard when it comes to addressing relevant subject areas for the region. The topic of ICTs and their importance for the region was raised in 2001 when the use of new technologies and computer networks in the region was still low. In 1994, the issues of terrorism, drugs, and insecurity were addressed so that steps could be taken to tackle them jointly; twenty years later these are the issues of greatest concern to the region.<sup>22</sup>

The purpose of the Summits has also been to make headway in implementing measures to combat poverty, promote social development, achieve economic growth with equity, and strengthen good governance in our democracies. The First Meeting of Ministers of Social Development, for example, was held at a time when the region was beginning to grow a step at a time and our main concerns were in growth and the opening of external markets. At the 2004 and 2005 Summits priorities had shifted as it became clear that one of the fundamental obstacles to growth and democracy lies in inequality and the lack of social cohesion. This gave rise to the Inter-American Social Protection Network, and we witnessed something astounding: South-North cooperation. We saw how one of the world's iconic cities, New York, benefited from the experience of the countries of the South in the area of conditional cash transfers.

It will be very difficult to tackle challenges without the hemispheric architecture created and consolidated through the eight hemispheric Summits. Fortunately, our ministerial processes have grown stronger during this process of ongoing consolidation of the inter-American system. To address challenges adequately, we must have this foundation—the foundation of a sound hemispheric architecture that allows respective authorities to develop mechanisms in support of hemispheric and multidimensional policies, with a view to greater effectiveness.

The platform built by the Summits is unique to our hemisphere, providing sustainability to matters discussed at the highest level, effectiveness in their treatment, and rigor in the design of clear-cut policies to benefit the population. Today more than ever before, multilateralism is an effective means for states to increase competitiveness, reduce poverty and inequality, fight organized crime, terrorism, drug and arms trafficking, and trafficking in persons, to formulate policies to further social development in such areas as education, employment, and social protection, and to reduce the visible effects to climate produced by global warming.

Many of the challenges we face are common to us all and many of them have a transnational component. Only through joint efforts will countries be able to find lasting solutions to their problems. The Summits, in short, are a reflection of the importance of regional governance in a globalized world and of the need to find collective solutions in a true spirit of hemispheric cooperation.

[1] See the World Bank publication, "On the Edge of Uncertainty. Poverty Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean during the Great Recession and Beyond," 2011, Available at [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLAC/Resources/LAC\\_poverty\\_report.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLAC/Resources/LAC_poverty_report.pdf).

[2] ECLAC, Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2011 – Published in January. Available at: <http://www.cepal.org/publicaciones>

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[4] ECLAC. CEPALSTAT at <http://websie.eclac.cl/infest/ajax/cepalstat.asp?carpeta=estadisticas>.

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[6] UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, The United States, Latin America and the Caribbean: Highlights of Economics and Trade, Santiago, Chile, 2011, p. 12. [http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/4/42854/2011-195\\_Highlights\\_of\\_economics\\_and\\_trade\\_WEB\\_3.pdf](http://www.eclac.org/publicaciones/xml/4/42854/2011-195_Highlights_of_economics_and_trade_WEB_3.pdf).

[7] US Census Bureau, "FT-900 Supplement, December 2011," February 10, 2012, p. 4. <http://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/international/trade/2012/pdf>.

[8] US Census Bureau, <http://sasweb.ssd.census.gov/relatedparty>.

[9] US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, "U.S. Direct Investment Abroad Tables," Survey of Current Business, September 2011. [http://www.bea.gov/scb/pdf/2011/09%20September/0911\\_usdia\\_tables.pdf](http://www.bea.gov/scb/pdf/2011/09%20September/0911_usdia_tables.pdf).

[10] Source: Barefoot, Kevin B. and Marilyn Ibarra-Caton, "Direct Investment Positions for 2010: Country and Industry Detail," Survey of Current Business, US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, July 2011, pp. 140-41. [http://www.bea.gov/scb/pdf/2011/07%20July/0711\\_direct.pdf](http://www.bea.gov/scb/pdf/2011/07%20July/0711_direct.pdf).

[11] Plan of Action, Second Summit of the Americas. Santiago, Chile. 1998.

[12] In 1994, there were only two free trade areas: the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Agreement. [www.sice.oas.org](http://www.sice.oas.org).

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[14] The JSWG is made up of twelve inter-American and international institutions that provide technical support to countries in the Summits process and carry out projects and initiatives to implement the Summit commitments.

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# OAS Strengths and Challenges

## Álvaro Colom, Former President of Guatemala

### “The OAS Always Accompanied my Government”

■ How do you recall the action of the OAS in relation to your country, during our mandate?

During our administration the OAS always responded promptly, and the officials it sent out were very well selected and dealt squarely with the requests we were making. Then too, there were programs that the OAS is pursuing in Guatemala, starting with the fielding of observers for our election. We were lucky to have the presence of OAS observers, which did much to maintain calm and ensure a good election—that was the first great support we received from the OAS.

The second occasion in which the OAS helped us was the Rosenberg crisis, when a crazy guy plunged the country into a real political crisis that threatened the rule of law and democracy. The first to respond was the OAS. The crisis began on a Monday and by Thursday the OAS Permanent Council had passed a resolution defending the rule of law and democracy. The Secretary General, Dr. Insulza, was the first international official to arrive. He met and spoke with the groups that were being formed. I would say that in this case the OAS took the lead in multilateral support for strengthening the rule of law and democracy. Together with the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), it helped

to shore up a government that was under serious threat. I would say this was the second of Guatemala’s good experiences with the OAS.

Then there was the *coup d’état* in Honduras on June 28, 2009. There the OAS played an important role and all of us in SICA and throughout Latin America mobilized to save democracy in Honduras.

The other crisis in Guatemala, which turned out not to be so serious precisely because of OAS intervention, concerned the National Civil Registry. This was not a question of partisan opposition but rather of opposition from the private sector, which raised the specter that the government was going to manipulate the registry in order to steal the elections. They launched a media campaign claiming that the registry was being manipulated. Things became quite critical at one point. I asked for help from the OAS to assess the situation of the registry and once again, promptly and efficiently, the Organization sent experts to evaluate the registry. After a review process, the OAS found that the civil registry was completely normal in its structure. In OAS experience in Latin America, all civil registries had problems of this kind, and there were degrees of



error that were within the normal range. There was no way to manipulate the voter list, which was shielded by electronic mechanisms and audits.

I must also mention the conflict with Belize, with which we had a border dispute. The OAS provided very effective support. A Line of Adjacency was established and this allowed negotiations with Belize to move forward. We are now awaiting the referendum in Belize and Guatemala, and I place great value on this, all the more so because we reached this point during my administration. Let us now hope that the peoples will decide to go to the Hague, and that they can resolve this dispute which has persisted for so many years between our two fraternal countries. The last thing they want is a border conflict.

■ **Having held the highest office in your country, what do you think are the issues where the OAS should have a greater presence?**

For sure, the issue of security and justice for dealing with organized crime. The issue of organized crime is going to be one for the entire hemisphere, from Canada to Patagonia. I believe that there must be much more involvement. I believe we can come to see the issue of organized crime as a problem for everyone, without hegemony, without impositions, that every country will offer what it has to offer and will share what it has to share. At the conference where the eight SICA countries agreed on security, Mexico, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Guatemala argued that we were not perpetrators but rather victims of the drug traffic, and that we should not be expected to carry on the struggle unless the consuming countries did their share. I believe this is an issue that will command a lot of discussion in the coming years, but unless we can work together as a region things are going to go badly for all of us. What is good for Mexico is good for Guatemala, what is good for Colombia is good for Guatemala, and whatever progress the USA can make in reducing

consumption, in controlling weapons, in controlling financial flows, in controlling the flows of chemicals—now that there are synthetic drugs—that will be good for all of us. No one can guarantee that the drug gangs [zetas] will not make their way into the United States, if they are not there already. No one can guarantee that a chief of police will not be bought off. I believe, then, that this situation of violence that prevails in Central America, Mexico, and Colombia is poisoning the entire hemisphere.

I believe there are many initiatives that are national or regional and that we should harmonize: the Merida Initiative, the Plan Colombia, the Central America Plan, the Caribbean Plan. The United States also has its struggle against drugs. But what we need is a kind of NATO against organized crime, if we are really going to win the war. It's fine to win battles, but what we need is to win the war. Let me give an example: the naval forces of the Pacific. The bulk of cocaine smuggling goes by sea. It's very revealing to look at the map of aggression from the cocaine trade. From Acapulco to Colombia it's as if they were strangling the region. Yet every one of our countries has a navy: it's not just one coast guard fighting with another coast guard, it's a different kind of war. We need different equipment, modern technology, aerial surveillance, and so on. I give this example because something could be done there. If there were regional coordination it would be easier.

For me, the issue of organized crime has to be looked at as a whole. It's not only about combating drugs but also money laundering. It's about helping the youth of Latin America so that the number of consumers will not increase. It's about combating poverty. For me, the very high level of violence in the area could be reduced if we reduce inequity—a young person with no opportunities faces thousands more risks, even in things that are not so dramatic. Twenty years ago, a young person who had a computer was a



rare exception. Today a young person who has no access to the Internet is poorer than one who has such access. So the patterns of poverty have changed and the components of inequity have become worse, and no one is noticing this. In Guatemala, for example, while the definition of the basic necessities basket has changed it still does not include the telephone. Who can live without a telephone? It has become a tool of work, of study, of knowledge, of access to information.

So I believe there are three contemporary issues on which we need to begin sounding out views and structuring ways to tackle them more proactively: security, justice, and inequality.

■ **With respect to the OAS role in preventing conflicts, bearing in mind the framework of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, what are your thoughts?**

I believe that the Inter-American Democratic Charter is a framework that needs to be updated. It has worked well, but in the Honduran crisis we saw that it lacked teeth. It lacked a protocol for action because, according to the countries of Latin America, there would never be another coup, but there was one. So I believe that we need mechanisms for prevention and protocols for action. No country knew what to do, we didn't know whether to close the borders or not. Knowing what to do at a time of crisis would have helped us a great deal, I think, because all the presidents wanted to save democracy in Honduras.

## “The OAS: A Space for Inter-American Dialogue”

■ In the process of consolidating democratic institutions in the hemisphere, although this was a natural process that began in the early 1990s, do you think the OAS has played any role?

I believe that role began when the Inter-American Democratic Charter was adopted in Lima in 2001, establishing for the first time, from the Latin American and Caribbean viewpoint, a charter that is the result of negotiations and long-standing proposals in the OAS. In all these years, from 2001 until today, the OAS has had a clear opinion, and it speaks on behalf of all its members. On occasion, what happens or what is said is not to everyone's liking. Sometimes the Secretary General puts forward an issue, Cuba for example, and he does so from the critical viewpoint that everyone recognizes: the lack of democratic institutions or a democratic sense of what is happening in Cuba. Or he may refer to the policies of the United States with respect to Latin America. During much of this time American policy was hijacked, so to speak, by such important issues as the events of September 11, 2001. Let us remember that the Charter was being discussed on September 11 in Lima and US Secretary of State Powell was there and he had to return immediately to the United States. As of that time, the problems that focused US attention were Afghanistan, Iraq, and the war against terrorism, and President Bush's desire to place Latin America in the center got relegated to the second or third rank. Then, some years later, there was a change in the United States and, as President Obama put it very nicely at his first meeting with leaders in Trinidad and Tobago, the idea was for the United States to have a policy “with” Latin America, not “for” Latin America, which seems to me a splendid idea.

Let us recognize as well that in his speech devoted especially to Latin America in Santiago, in March 2011, President Obama made it clear that he wanted to work “with” Latin America. He laid out the agenda, an agenda that has to do with migration policies, the international agenda that is in the package today. Some said that it was very important to have put these topics on the agenda, and that it was now up to us Latin Americans to supplement the agenda by putting forth our viewpoints, and what we believe are the US points, in order to begin a fruitful dialogue.

I believe some of this can be achieved at the next meeting that will be held in Cartagena, Colombia. With respect to the drugs issue, it is very important for the United States to accept discussion at that level, because it would then be recognizing that the drugs issue is not a domestic political topic but also, and essentially, one of hemispheric politics. I think that achieving this was a triumph on the part of President Santos and it was also a success to have agreement that the next meeting, after direct discussions with Cuba, with President Castro and with President Chavez, who at that time was in Cuba, there would be full participation at the Colombia meeting.

Ricardo Lagos,  
Former President  
of Chile

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No doubt, then, the OAS has been a visible, active political player in this part of the world. I also believe that there are governments that seem to have an ideological slant, identified as left or right, but I think these are just labels, because sometimes presidents are elected who seem so far out to the left but the truth is that there is not much change in policies once they come to power. On this point, it seems to me that the OAS has a history that should be respected by all, and in this respect I think that many countries must learn to generate trust. In my view it is very important the role that José Miguel Insulza has played in these years, which have not been easy ones, where he has managed to offer a considered opinion appropriate for his role; many times he will be criticized by one side or the other, because he doesn't agree with them one hundred percent—and he cannot and should not. I think we have to learn to preserve the OAS as a meeting place where leaders have to

put themselves in others' shoes, understand what others are thinking, in order to have a space to continue the dialogue. The Secretary General has to preserve that role, even though he may sometimes have the feeling that no one agrees with him, because this means that in the final analysis he is fulfilling the role of seeking balance and not of coming down on one side or the other, but rather on the side of democracy. And democracy, in the final analysis, is the capacity to hold dialogue with those who do not think the same, and to find ways of resolving conflicts within that dialogue.

■ Mr. President, along the lines of what you were saying, given the important issues affecting the hemisphere—transnational crime, essentially—and adding another element that you mentioned, the one about ideological differences that are now more clearly defined than in the past, do you think that the OAS is a real political forum for inter-American dialogue?

By definition, Latin America and the Caribbean are located geographically in this hemisphere and the number one military power in the world today is located in this hemisphere, and so it is essential to have an appropriate space for dialogue between Latin America, the Caribbean and the United States. I remember on one occasion I put this idea to my friend Jean Chrétien, who was then Prime Minister of Canada, and although we normally did our talking in English he responded in French *"Monsieur le Président, je suis latin aussi, je parle français"*—"Mr. President, I am Latin too, I speak French"—indicating that if there is a space where Latin America can meet with the United States, then he would like to be part of the Latin space, in order to have, as he put it, a more enriching dialogue with the United States. And that space, quite naturally, is the OAS. There are other spaces where the United States is not present, and those other spaces have their own internal reality, which does not mean that they cannot be a forum for discussion with the United States. But it is one thing to discuss with the United States on the outside and another thing to discuss things with the United States on the inside. This is a great advantage that we must not overlook.

The second thing I want to say in this respect is that it very important for the OAS that the dialogue should be a broad dialogue, and in this respect when President Santos, to resolve the impasse, says that he is going to advocate making room in the OAS for Cuba, he is again raising the problem of Cuba in the OAS in an appropriate way. Let us hope, then, that there can be more openness for resolving it, and in this way antagonists that seem so far apart as the United States and Cuba could find within the OAS appropriate rules of the game so that everyone is comfortable with pursuing dialogue.

■ With respect to the good health that democracy now enjoys in the region, and the role I assume you attribute to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, do you believe that the Charter has aspects that can be improved, especially when it comes to preventing conflicts?

Yes indeed I do. The Charter was established more than ten years ago, and during that time there have been situations where it demonstrated its value. When the situation in Honduras arose, where President Zelaya was overthrown, what happened then was that countries unanimously condemned this and took very firm measures. I experienced it at first hand, because the OAS honored me with a special mission and I had to visit Honduras and meet with the de facto authorities, and they understood at the time that they were completely isolated. I believe the Charter has played a very valuable role. But what is important is how we can prevent such events and take action in advance, and not as in Honduras only after the fact. I think the experience of

those years would allow us—ideally just as the idea of the "responsibility to protect" has been making headway at the United Nations—to enshrine the need to act in advance. When countries see a complex situation coming, what can be done to prevent it, understanding the need to respect each country's sovereignty, but also understanding that once the rule of law is broken it is much more difficult to restore it.

In a sense, when there was a complex situation in some member country, and there was a risk that it could end in an internal confrontation, the actions of the Secretary General were very important in preventing the crisis and negotiating a way out. It's possible that these experiences will produce improvements for the Democratic Charter so that it gives authorization to take certain types of preventive action and not only to act after the fact, and to enforce the sanctions established in the Charter. It is at least worth the effort of exploring along these lines.



## Luiz Inácio *Lula Da Silva*, Former President of Brazil

### “The Challenges of Democracy”

If the 1980s and part of the 1990s were indeed labeled the “lost decade,” it is equally true that the historical period from the end of the 20th century to the present will be remembered, in the future, for the extraordinary strides made by the hemisphere in the political, economic, and social arenas.

It is common knowledge that the dictatorships imposed on nearly all of the countries of the region were responsible for the destruction of republican institutions, the systematic violation of human rights, and the erosion of our cultural life. What many people forget, however, is that they also unleashed a massive course of social and economic disruption, which aided, and was aided by, political repression. With the long night of dictatorship behind them, many countries became de-industrialized—their macroeconomics weakened and relegated to a subordinate role in a world undergoing profound change. Others developed pockets of wealth and modernization at the expense of workers and the poor, who were over-exploited and increasingly marginalized socially.

They governed only one third of the population. The working class of practically the entire region was dealt terrible setbacks in terms of their labor union and party representation. The work environment was unregulated and unstable. Besides, whether or not they were sympathetic to authoritarianism, most of the local elites lost their erstwhile power and importance, and appeared to lack strategy and leadership.

It is quite amazing, then, that in a little more than a decade the region has been able to return solidly to a path of political democracy. More importantly: that millions of men and women have made significant progress in terms of economic and social democracy.

José Miguel Insulza experienced that new period intensely. He did so, because he experienced in dramatic fashion the defeat of the left Chile in 1973, the cruel era of the Pinochet dictatorship, and then, the process of institutional reconstruction in his country, in which he played an important role.

Democracy, to him, is not a set of concepts from a political science handbook but rather an experience fraught with pitfalls, requiring intelligence and patience.

When his name came up as a candidate for Secretary General of the Organization of American States, my government did not hesitate to give him its firm support. I told my fellow leaders of the region how enthusiastic we were about that candidacy. We wanted an organized OAS that was different from the Cold War era OAS—an OAS closer to what was led by Baena Soares of Brazil, in which the quest for peace superseded ideological biases.

Insulza’s management of the OAS has lived up to expectations. The diversity of routes taken by the peoples of our region yearning to deepen democracy has been anything but a monotonous repetition of political scenarios.

Instead, it introduced a new complexity, because our countries ushered in an extraordinary level of participation by the working classes that were previously excluded from the political process. Such participation is always—and understandably so—contentious. But conflicts, ultimately, are a vital part of democracy.

Comrade Insulza, in his capacity as leader of the OAS, kept a keen eye on the changes that our region experienced over the last few years. Whenever possible, he tried to take preventive action—guided by respect for democracy and sovereignty in the region.





## Tabaré Vázquez, Former President of Uruguay

### “The OAS Highlight and Lowpoints”

The OAS is the creature of circumstances. Only in this way can one understand its background, its creation, its track record and its present and, to the extent the future is governable, foresee what it will become.

Varied, variable and complicated circumstances have produced a track record of light and shadows which—it’s right to say this although it seems obvious—are also our lights and shadows. Because the OAS cannot be viewed separately from its members, and none of those members is historically predestined to be either a victim or a victimizer. We are all subject to history, and therefore we are all responsible for it as well.

The past never rests in peace and the future always beckons and drives us forward. It is not easy to resolve this equation, but as far as our region is concerned, it is an unavoidable task as will be recognized in the Sixth Summit of the Americas and the 42nd General Assembly of the OAS, two important meetings that will be held in the first half of this year.

What is frustrating in these circumstances is that in both these meetings, which are so important for our countries in terms of integration and development based on sovereignty and democracy, there will be a glaring void that has lasted for half a century.

The fact is that Cuba continues to be excluded, notwithstanding the resolution adopted in 2009 by the 39th OAS General Assembly revoking the 1962 decision that excluded it from the inter-American system.

We need to reverse this situation, not only because it is absurd and unfair, but also because, while it persists, it casts a cloud over strategic action by the OAS in other areas. It is also unfair when we take into account the actions and tasks that the OAS performs in reference to defense and promoting peace and sovereignty as key elements of integration, democratic institutions as the basis for the organization of state and society, rights as instruments of democratic coexistence and ethics, civic responsibility in democracy, transparency in elections, social protection, citizen security, combating corruption and crime, and so on.

As just another citizen, and like the great majority of citizens, I believe that this will be the last Summit of the Americas where not all the Americas are present. I know this will not be easy to achieve, but I am one of those who believe that it is not problems but resignation that defeats human beings. And I will never resign myself to pettiness.

I believe in the OAS, then, as a forum that is as diverse as our America, and I believe in its instruments and its efforts to promote homegrown democracy and its exercise, which is indispensable for the prosperity of our peoples.

Maybe those instruments are not perfect, and maybe those efforts are not sufficient? Most certainly, but the instruments can always be improved and we can always make a little more effort.

In this context, the Inter-American Democratic Charter represents an excellent balance of commitments and challenges that involve us all around the common objective, which is both necessary and possible, of creating an America that becomes better day by day for all its nations and for every one of its citizens.





# The Promotion and Defense of Democracy

“We are at an unprecedented point in our history when all the OAS member states choose their governments democratically, in competitive, free, and transparent elections. We must strengthen these processes over time, continually improving them and making them more accessible to all citizens.”

**José Miguel Insulza, OAS Secretary General**  
September 11, 2006

The mission of the Secretariat of Political Affairs (SPA) is to contribute to strengthening political processes and institutions in OAS member states in order to ensure the sustainability of democracy, which has been recognized and accepted in the hemisphere as the best option for ensuring peace, security, development, and the full exercise of citizenship.

The SPA directs its efforts at strengthening the role of the Organization of American States (OAS) as the primary political forum of the inter-American system and at contributing actively to sustaining democratic order in the member states. Towards these ends, it acts to increase the legitimacy of institutions in political processes and to strengthen institutional mechanisms that support the consolidation of democracy in the region.

In addition to the Executive Office of the Secretary for Political Affairs, the SPA is composed of three dependencies: the Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO), the Department of Democratic Sustainability and Special Missions (DSDME), and the Department for Effective Public Management (DEPM).





## Election Observation

This year, the OAS is celebrating a half century of observing elections in the Americas. Election observation is undoubtedly one of the most recognized and long-standing activities of the OAS, and over the years, Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs) have become an essential instrument for promoting and defending democracy in the region. The missions promote the positive recognition of the political rights of citizens, especially the exercise of suffrage as the legitimate right of all citizens to elect and to be elected in a free and inclusive manner, with respect for the secret ballot and the expression of popular will. The presence of an OAS Observation Mission also represents the solidarity and support of the inter-American community as the democratic institutions of the states undertake the organization and administration of their own electoral processes.

Since the first mission in 1962, the OAS has observed 194 elections in 26 member states. During this half-century, the OAS has accumulated the experience and capacity necessary for observing presidential, legislative and constituent, parliamentary, regional, and municipal elections as well as referendums, popular consultations, the Andean Parliament elections, and primaries. Today OAS Electoral Observation Missions cover all of Latin America and the Caribbean and are considered a seal of guarantee and legitimacy of electoral processes.

### The Evolution of Electoral Observation Missions

The role, structure, composition, and dynamic of the missions have changed as the countries of the regions have gone through their own internal political changes. As nations began to consolidate their democracies, election observations in the first years focused on dissuading situations of fraud. Today, however, observation includes matters of access and equity in elections, among other things.

The approval of the Inter-American Democratic Charter in 2001 was a key factor in the evolution of the missions. For instance, between 1962 and 2001 the OAS observed a total of 93 electoral processes. In the ten years that have passed since the signing of the Charter, however, the OAS has observed 101 electoral processes. One entire chapter of the Inter-American Democratic Charter—Chapter Five—is dedicated to democracy and Electoral Observation Missions. The application of this chapter marks the beginning of the third generation of EOMs, because now the missions are considered comprehensive and long-term. They focus on the quality of the processes and on electoral institutions, and their observation is no longer limited to the day of the elections.

In the process of updating and modernizing the Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO), a first methodology for systematizing the observation of electoral processes was developed. As a result of this effort, the OAS published one document titled “Criteria for Electoral Observation: A Manual for OAS Electoral Observation Missions” (2006) and another called the “Manual for Electoral Observation Missions of the Organization of American States” (2008). After that, a strategic process for developing rigorous tools and methodologies for election observation began.

In this effort to increase the professionalism, sophistication, and comprehensive nature of election observation, DECO published the document, “Observing the Use of Electoral Technologies: A Manual for OAS Electoral Observation Missions” in 2010. Likewise, in order to evaluate conditions of equity for

participating in elections, DECO also designed a “Methodology for Media Observation during Elections.”

With the objective of making inequality between women and men in electoral competitions more visible, DECO has also incorporated a gender perspective into its missions. This new focus allows the OAS to do a systematic analysis of the participation of men and women in electoral processes: as voters, as candidates, and within the electoral agencies. The methodology is focused primarily on identifying and making visible the obstacles and discriminatory actions that keep women from having full access to political citizenship. Recommendations are then formulated to help the member states overcome this democratic deficit.

One of the most recent initiatives of the Department is the creation of a comprehensive methodology for observing various aspects of current political-electoral financing systems in the countries of the region.

At the end of each mission, the Secretary General presents a report to the Permanent Council that includes recommendations based on the direct observations. A review of the recommendations made in the EOM final reports reveals that there is room to strengthen some aspects of the electoral processes, for example: the lists of registered voters, the make-up of elections authorities, political financing, vote-counting and/or the transmission of results, and the participation of women.

One of the areas identified as needing improvement in the last decade has to do with voter registration. As a follow-up to the recommendations made to various countries, the OAS conducted an audit of voter registration lists in Guatemala (2005 and 2010), El Salvador (2007), Bolivia (2009), and Paraguay (2010). The OAS Electoral Observation Missions have also detected the need to strengthen the legal framework in matters related to the funding of political campaigns.

The General Secretariat of the OAS continues to work on improving Electoral Observation Missions in order to support one of the pillars of the Organization: the strengthening of democratic institutions and processes in the region. In doing so, it has signed two technical cooperation agreements with electoral bodies in the region to address different components of the electoral process, contribute to the rationalization and quality of the process, and strengthen electoral institutions. One of the agreements was signed in 2009 with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal of Honduras on matters relating to electoral mapping and the inclusion of people with disabilities. Another was signed with the National Electoral Council (CNE) of Ecuador in 2011 on topics of automation and vote counting in electoral processes.





## Democratic Sustainability and Special Missions

### 1. Preventing and Resolving Political-Institutional Crises: Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Guatemala

The crisis prevention, management, and resolution activities of the OAS can be framed within the Inter-American Democratic Charter approved on September 11, 2001 in Lima, Peru. They can be seen as a tool that accomplishes two complementary and mutually reinforcing functions. On the one hand this is a political program that, in the words of the Secretary General, “guides the construction and consolidation of democratic republics in the region.” On the other hand, it is also a collective action mechanism to defend and protect democracies in the region.

In the ten years since the enactment of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, Chapter Four of the Charter has been invoked at least

nine times, including during the 2009 *coup d'état* in Honduras. In seven of these cases, the Charter was applied preventatively to avoid the escalation of political-institutional crises that could have endangered the democratic process or the legitimate exercise of power and led to ruptures in the democratic order. Some of the mechanisms used effectively by the OAS to overcome situations with a high potential for destabilization include sending special missions and representatives and opening up dialogue processes. These steps have helped to prevent serious harm to democratic order.

The five cases below are examples of moments when the Organization of American States employed preventative measures at the request of an affected member state to keep tensions from escalating and prevent the derailing of the democratic political process.

#### Nicaragua 2005

In June 2005, the OAS sent a special mission to Nicaragua at the request of President Enrique Bolaños in order to facilitate a dialogue between the government and the major political parties. The political-institutional crisis began when the President decided not to publish a partial reform of the Constitution. This decision of the executive branch kept the partial reform from going into effect and precipitated a power struggle between the executive and the legislative branches. The Supreme Court of Justice got involved in the dispute when it ratified the constitutional amendments that had been introduced by the National Assembly but rejected by the executive branch.

The critical situation that emerged and the impasse created between the branches of government led the Government of Nicaragua to request the deployment of an OAS mission. In response, on June 7, 2005, the General Assembly invoked Article 18 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and approved Declaration AG/DEC.43 (XXXV-O/05) which resolved to send, as soon as possible, “a mission headed by the OAS Secretary General that helps to establish a broad national dialogue, with a view to finding democratic solutions to the serious problems that exist.”

The OAS Special Mission stayed in Nicaragua for five months, between June and October of 2005, accompanying a

political dialogue that led to the approval of the Framework Law for Stability and Governance of the Country. The Framework Law incorporated agreements reached between the various political forces, including an agreement to suspend the application of the constitutional reform. It also created the conditions for the electoral process of March and November 2006 to proceed normally. Finally, interaction between political forces was institutionalized by creating a Dialogue Roundtable with the Catholic Church and the OAS as guarantors. This facilitated legislative work in many important areas.

OAS accompaniment to overcome the crisis culminated in the deployment of an Electoral Observation Mission for regional elections on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua on March 5, 2006, and in the presidential and legislative elections held on November 5 of that same year.

#### Ecuador 2005

In response to a request from the Government of Ecuador, the OAS Secretary General established a Special Mission to accompany the process of selecting the members of the Supreme Court of Justice between June and November of 2005. The Special Mission was developed according to the stipulations of Resolution 883 approved by the Permanent Council on May 20, 2005 invoking Article 18 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

“(...) the General Secretariat will give priority support to initiatives for strengthening the bases of the democratic system, with special attention to the immediate integration of an independent and impartial Supreme Court of Justice,” declared the Secretary General at the conclusion of his meeting with President Alfredo Palacio on a visit to Ecuador on July 26-28, 2005.

At the time of the mission’s arrival, the country had been without a Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ) for more than one year. The CSJ magistrates had been fired on two occasions, once in December 2004, and once in April 2005. The first time, between November and December 2004, Ecuador’s National Congress dismissed the justices of the Constitutional Tribunal and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, as well as the magistrates of the Supreme Court of Justice, and named others in their place. In April 2005, the new Supreme Court magistrates decided to drop

charges against two former presidents and one former vice-president of the country, which aggravated the already existing social and political tensions in the country. In an effort to contain the protests and discontent, President Lucio Gutiérrez dissolved the Supreme Court and declared a state of emergency in the city of Quito. Both decisions exacerbated sentiments even further. In this context, Congress approved the removal of the President “for abandoning his responsibilities,” under Article 167 of the Constitution and activated the constitutional succession mechanism, naming Vice President Alfredo Palacio González as President. The legislature then approved a Reform of the Organic Law of the Judicial Function in order to determine the mechanism for selecting magistrates and associate judges of the Supreme Court of Justice. Various sectors of society, however, considered this reform unconstitutional.

With a society divided around the constitutionality of the Reform of the Organic Law of the Judicial Function and a public opinion that was skeptical of the criteria for selecting the members of the Supreme Court of Justice, the presence of an OAS Mission guaranteed the transparency of the process of selecting and naming the judges of the Supreme Court of Justice and, therefore, contributed to the democratic normalization of the country.

#### Bolivia 2008

In response to a request from the government of President Evo Morales, the OAS took action in Bolivia to facilitate a dialogue between the government and the opposition. The diplomacy and good offices of the OAS were employed in the context of confrontations that were occurring around the new Political Constitution. At the time, the central government was facing opposition in certain sectors, especially from the prefects and civic committees of the four eastern departments of the so-called “Media Luna,” which were calling for greater autonomy.

“(...) we ask the international community and this Permanent Council to accompany this referendum process so that you can see with your own eyes, together, how we can find a democratic solution, a solution of dialogue.”

On April 26 and May 2, the Bolivian Foreign Minister addressed the Permanent Council once more to describe the political events that were affecting his country and the constitutional government and to request the assistance of the OAS in the framework of Article 17 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

On May 3, 2008, Resolution 935 titled “Support for the Process of Dialogue and Peace and for Democratic Institutions in Bolivia” was passed. Through this resolution, the Permanent Council reiterated the Organization’s willingness to provide the support that the Government of Bolivia would require to conduct the process of dialogue and to strengthen democracy. It also instructed the OAS Secretary General to continue to employ his good offices to promote dialogue and build consensus in Bolivia.

In order to fulfill the mandate of the Resolution, the OAS followed political developments in the country closely. Then Special Envoys named by the Secretary General made several visits to Bolivia in order to establish channels of communication between political and social actors that were not communicating directly. Through this “itinerant diplomacy,” an intermediated dialogue took place and it was possible to identify points of agreement and overcome political discrepancies through institutional channels.

Through the presence of an Electoral Observation Mission, the OAS also guaranteed the transparency of the recall referendum on the revocation of the responsibilities of the president, which was held in eight of the nine prefects on August 10.

In October, the OAS went on to participate in a dialogue between the central government and the prefects and helped facilitate the dialogue between the senators and deputies of all of the political forces of the congress. Finally, the OAS was present and employed its good offices, along with other international organizations, during the negotiations of the dialogue roundtable established in the Congress of the Republic. The presence of the OAS facilitated negotiations that made it possible to reach an inter-party political agreement and approve the new Political Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.



## Guatemala 2009

Democratic stability in Guatemala was threatened in May 2009 after the murder of attorney Rodrigo Rosenberg who, before dying, left a video in which he accused President Álvaro Colom and members of his close circle of being responsible for his death. When the video became public, sectors of the Guatemalan society mobilized, some against the government, others in favor.

In order to prevent any threat to the stability of the democratic constitutional order, the Permanent Council approved Resolution 950, on May 13, 2009. Through the resolution, the OAS expressed its support for the constitutional government of Guatemala and, among other things, asked the Secretary General to provide all of the institutional cooperation possible, at the request of the Government of Guatemala, to strengthen and preserve the democratic institutions of that country.

In the framework of that Resolution, the Secretary General and the Secretary for Political Affairs travelled to Guatemala with the objective of supporting the constitutional government of Guatemala. They held meetings with the primary political and social actors of the country and offered political and technical assistance to the Government of Guatemala. The preventative diplomacy exercised by the OAS contributed to preventing an escalation of the crisis and containing the danger to democratic order.

## Ecuador 2010

On September 30, 2010 a police riot erupted in Ecuador. Faced with the imminent danger of an alteration of constitutional order, the Permanent Council met in a special session at the request of the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the OAS, Ambassador María Isabel Salvador. After analyzing the critical situation in Ecuador, member states approved Resolution 977 by acclamation on the same day the police uprising occurred. In that resolution, the representatives repudiated the events that had occurred, expressed their decisive support for the constitutional government of President Rafael Correa, and urged the law enforcement personnel and political and social sectors to avoid all acts of violence that could further exacerbate the already unstable political situation. At the same time, the Secretary General was asked to provide "the Organization's full



cooperation, at the request of the Government of Ecuador, to preserve the democratic institutional system in that country."

Following the mandate of the resolution, the Secretary General travelled immediately to Ecuador to express his support and solidarity to the President. The immediate reaction of both the Permanent Council and the Secretary General of the OAS contributed in a timely way towards containing the crisis situation and dissuading the destabilizing sectors. The support of citizens and that of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Ecuador were also decisive. Foreign Minister Ricardo Patiño expressed his government's appreciation for the full support of the OAS and for the solidarity it had shown to the people of Ecuador and the government of President Rafael Correa.

## 2. Prevention and Resolution of Intra-state Conflicts: the Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP/OAS)

On January 23, 2004, the Government of Colombia and the OAS Secretary General signed an agreement to establish a Mission to Support the Peace Process (MAPP/OAS) in order to accompany the implementation of the peace process between the national government of Colombia and illegal armed groups in a comprehensive manner.

In this context, MAPP/OAS verified the ceasefire and participated in the negotiation roundtable with the illegal groups who were in the process of disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating former combatants from the "United Self-Defense Forces" and from the Guevarista Revolutionary Army (ERG). At the same time, more than 18,000 weapons were taken out of circulation and destroyed



under the MAPP monitoring process. The mission witnessed the early processes of transitional justice in the country and provided support to local and national initiatives aimed at reconciliation, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, building a culture of peace, and rebuilding trust between communities and institutions in areas where state presence was limited.

In 2010, the national government decided to expand some of the functions given to the Mission, without detriment to the previous functions, and included the following: accompaniment of the National Policy for Social and Economic Reintegration; monitoring the implementation, application, and publicizing of the Justice and Peace Process; and accompaniment of institutional efforts in the framework of the Justice and Peace Process in order to achieve truth, justice, and reparations. This expansion of functions extended the mandate of the OAS Mission in Colombia through January 2014.

The following achievements are some of the highlights of the eight years that the mission has been in Colombia so far:

- 36 group demobilizations (31,671 combatants) verified
- 27,940 victims who participated in the Justice and Peace process were accompanied
- 234 community leaders trained in the Justice and Peace Law
- 220 municipal ombudsmen trained in the Justice and Peace Law
- 11 meetings for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
- Ongoing presence maintained in municipalities where 75% of the demobilized population is located
- 15 ceremonies for turning over remains of the deceased were accompanied
- 5 processes for restoring property were accompanied
- 5 victims networks strengthened

- 60 focus groups conducted with the demobilized population to learn about how they perceived the reintegration program
- 2,300 people participated in 6 projects with specific populations
- 100 municipalities of 24 departments monitored on matters relating to the recruitment of vulnerable groups
- Institutional networks (117) built in seven departments of Colombia that studied the issue of the recruitment of vulnerable groups
- 1 special assessment report given on the state of the situation of the Justice and Peace Law
- 16 follow-up reports on the Justice and Peace process presented by the Secretary General to the Permanent Council

In early 2012, MAPP/OAS reinforced its efforts to contribute to the achievement of a stable and lasting peace in Colombia. In this sense, the Mission decided to channel its efforts along two main lines: first, advising the government on matters of transitional justice; and second, accompanying the government as they make reparations to victims and restore stolen lands.



## 3. Peace Fund for the Peaceful Settlement of Territorial Disputes: The Case of Belize and Guatemala

In June 2000, the Ministers of Foreign Relations of OAS member states gathered at the OAS General Assembly in Windsor, Canada, established a Peace Fund in order to provide specialized technical information and financial resources to member states who request such assistance, so that these member states could settle their territorial disputes with the help of the OAS. Currently, the Peace Fund is operating out of the Department of Democratic Sustainability and Special Missions (DDSSM) of the OAS Secretariat for Political Affairs.

The Peace Fund is more than a financial tool, however. When they jointly ask the OAS for assistance, the parties in dispute can benefit from a series of conflict resolution mechanisms envisaged in the OAS Charter, including direct negotiation, good offices, mediation, investigation and conciliation, judicial settlements, confidence building measures, arbitration, and any other mechanism that both parties agree upon together.



# OAS PEACE FUND



Organization of  
American States

Since its creation in 2000, the OAS Peace Fund has contributed to resolving maritime controversies in the Caribbean Sea between Honduras and Nicaragua and has aided in the demarcation of the international border between Honduras and El Salvador. Currently, the Peace Fund is providing technical, diplomatic, and political assistance to Guatemala and Belize to resolve their territorial disagreement.

## a. The Role of the OAS in the Peaceful Resolution of the Territorial Disagreement between Guatemala and Belize

The governments of Guatemala and Belize reinitiated a dialogue on their long-standing territorial disagreement in March 2000, under the auspices of the OAS Peace Fund. On that occasion, both countries established a Panel of Conciliators to channel the process of negotiations. As a result of this process, in November 2000, the Foreign Ministers of Guatemala and Belize signed an Agreement on Confidence-Building Measures, which was amended in February 2003 and once again in September 2005.

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## b. OAS Office in the Adjacency Zone: Activities on the Ground

The OAS has been operating without interruption since 2003 thanks, in large part, to the contributions of the countries that make of the Group of Friends of Belize and Guatemala. Among the many activities carried out from the office, the most significant are the verifications and reports on incidents in the Adjacency Zone (AZ). This task is not only the most important ongoing activity of the Office, but is also the vehicle for the ongoing presence of the OAS in the communities throughout the AZ.

The OAS also provides support for inter-institutional coordination between the two countries on various levels. Coordination between the police agencies of the two countries and between the Belize Defense Forces (BDF) and the Guatemalan Army is ongoing and vitally important. Both armies also receive equipment support in the form of the purchase, delivery, and training on global positioning devices (GPS) and radio-communications equipment.

Likewise, the OAS works in close coordination with the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) supporting tasks related to mapping. This type of support is requested when a particular verification assignment requires a high level of precision in terms of mapping and reading coordinates. With the support of the PAIGH, the OAS offers cartographic and geospatial workshops and instruction on the correct use of the GPS equipment. The armies' GPS equipment is calibrated during these workshops to avoid errors in locating the exact demarcation of the Adjacency Zone.

The OAS has also promoted an annual program on the culture of peace with the participation of approximately 300 students from local schools in both countries. With the support of the OAS Young Americas Business Trust, training workshops on rural tourism are organized

and given to students and teachers who live in the Adjacency Zone who are interested in developing capacities in these activities.

During 2004 and 2005, 30 Guatemalan families in the Barrio Judá located on the part of the AZ being administered by Belize were re-settled. Likewise, during 2007 and 2008, 17 families from the Santa Rosa community in the part of the AZ administered by Belize were resettled to a new community located within the AZ administered by Guatemala. These two population resettlement projects in the framework of territorial disagreements are unique in the hemisphere.

## c. Next Steps towards Definitively Overcoming the Territorial Disagreement

On December 8, 2008 in the headquarters of the OAS, the Foreign Ministers of Guatemala and Belize signed the Special Agreement between Belize and Guatemala to Submit to the Territorial, Insular, and Maritime Claim of Guatemala to the International Court of Justice, following the recommendation of the OAS Secretary General to submit the dispute to international arbitration. Currently, internal procedures are being carried out in the respective national systems to hold referendums on the decision to allow the International Court of Justice to resolve this territorial controversy. These referendums will take place simultaneously in both countries before the end of the year 2012 on a date that has not yet been determined.



## Effective Public Administration

In 2008, the General Assembly approved AG/RES. 2362 (XXXVIII-O/08) on the Inter-American Program for Universal Civil Registry and the "Right to Identity." Under this mandate, the Universal Civil Identity Program in the Americas (PUICA) was created within the OAS Secretariat for Political Affairs. Since then, PUICA has provided support to strengthen civil registry institutions in the countries of the region and is educating regionally about the importance of universal civil registration.

Through various technical support projects carried out with the civil registries of the region, PUICA contributes to facilitating and expanding access to civil identity for millions of men, women, and children in the region. Civil identity is the first step necessary for the legal recognition of an individual. It facilitates access to basic services like health and education; it offers greater possibilities for people to exercise their civil, political, social, and economic rights; and for them to participate actively as citizens. Updated and reliable civil registries also give the state precise information about the population so it can design and implement more targeted and effective social programs, development plans, and public policies.

Given the importance of universal civil registries for the development of countries in the hemisphere and for strengthening citizenship, one priority of PUICA is to disseminate information about the

importance of civil identity in the states of the region and to organize exchanges on successful practices among registry institutions. It also promotes horizontal cooperation agreements between states, and collaborates with diverse organizations that work in the area of civil identity. Finally, the OAS supports collaborative work with the Latin American and Caribbean Council for Civil Registration, Identification, and Vital Statistics (CLARCIEV), a body that brings together the civil registry directors from all of Latin America, Haiti, and Jamaica.

The Inter-American Program for Universal Civil Registry and "the Right to Identity" works towards its objectives through a number of projects, whose main activities and achievements are listed below. PUICA is guided by the mission of ensuring "that by 2015, birth registration . . . is universal, accessible, and, if possible, cost-free." During these last few years, the under-registration rate has decreased from approximately 18% early in the decade to about 10% currently. An increase in state investment in civil registry institutions is also being seen. The continuity of these efforts nationally and regionally will contribute to reaching the effective universal registration of all persons and to strengthening registry institutions so that they generate timely, precise, and current information.



Mexico and Central America

Mexico: Promoting Civil Identity/ Exchanging Best Practices/Raising Awareness

- International symposium for measuring the under-registration of births
- A workshop on best practices in technologies applied to the civil registry

Belize: Modernizing the Vital Statistics Unit

- New application to introduce and verify information on births, deaths, and marriages
- Renovation of equipment to modernize and expedite registry processes and digitize certificates
- Conservation of historical documents

Guatemala: Mobile Campaigns for Registration and Awareness-Raising/ Institutional Strengthening/ Process Audits

- Three campaigns to register people and raise awareness in five municipalities
- Training of more than 800 indigenous leaders in registry processes. They in turn helped to register more than 2,500 people
- Audits of the processes for producing Personal Identity Documents (DPI). Because of this exercise, more than 4 million purged records from the National Registry of Persons (RENAP) were sent to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE)
- Auxiliary registry offices established in five hospitals, accompanied by awareness-raising campaigns. Two more auxiliary offices will be opened shortly.



Honduras: Registration and Awareness-Raising Campaign

- Campaign to register people and raise awareness with the support of municipal leaders, through which 260 people were registered
- Training sessions on registration issues
- Plans made to replicate the campaign at the national level

El Salvador: Strengthening the Hospital Registration System/ Awareness-Raising Campaign

- Installation of two hospital registration systems
- Awareness-raising campaigns that reached more than 20,000 mothers
- Birth certificates issued for more than 11,000 newborns



South America

Bolivia: Mobile Campaigns for Registration and Awareness-Raising/ Facilitating Access to the Civil Registry Service

- Birth certificates were issued to more than 15,000 people and errors were corrected on more than 9,000 civil registry certificates

Paraguay: Modernizing Marital Status Records/ Digitizing Historical Documents/ Registration Campaigns

- More than 2.5 million certificates were digitized and entered into a secure data base

Peru: Mobile Registration and Awareness-Raising Campaigns/ Reconstructing Records

- In coordination with the authorities of eight schools, identity documents (DNI) were given to 6,362 minors, and 190 birth certificates were issued

- The mobile awareness-raising campaign system was expanded to other districts, and a total of more than 15,000 people were registered

- In terms of the reconstruction of destroyed records and the regularization of people affected by the armed conflict in Huancavelica; 8,522 records from court archives and 576 books from the municipalities of Huancavelica were transferred so their information could be incorporated into the civil registry

Caribbean

Haiti: Mobile Registration Campaigns/ Pilot Projects for Registering Minors in Hospitals/ Modernization and Integration of the Civil Registry/ Accompaniment of Process of Preparing for the 2011 Presidential Elections

- More than 4.8 millions Haitians—85% of the adult population—were registered
- 141 identification offices were opened all over the country

- In the context of the electoral process, lost identity documents were re-issued, new documents were issued, and both sets of documents were distributed

- Digitizing of more than 14 million historical records on an electronic data base, and training of 80 operators

- Support for the process of revising and modernizing the law governing the national registration system

Eastern Caribbean: Modernizing Civil Registries/ Digitizing Historical Documents

- The project has been implemented in Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and it is expected to be implemented soon in Dominica, Saint Lucia, and Saint Kitts and Nevis





## Electronic Government Program

The sudden emergence of information and communications technology (ITC) in the area of public administration opens up infinite possibilities for improving efficiency and transparency in government, and for facilitating and increasing the participation of citizens in public administration. These new technologies have become valuable allies not only for administrative speed and efficacy, but also for democratic sustainability..

The governments of the region have demonstrated their interest and commitment to a knowledge-based society through a number of instruments and in various spaces of the inter-American system—including the Declaration of Santo Domingo (AG/DEC.

46 XXXVI-O/06) of 2006 and the Fourth Summit of the Americas of Mar del Plata, Argentina in 2005. They also asked the OAS for support in advancing a regional agenda related on this theme.

In this context, the Department for Effective Public Management introduced the Electronic Government Program. The Program is made up of five large initiatives:

### Network of E-Government Leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean (RED GEALC)

[www.redgealc.org](http://www.redgealc.org)

This network groups the directors of electronic governance of Latin America and the Caribbean. It supports the work of the directors with information, training, research, consulting, exchanges of experiences, and political dialogue.

### Inter-American Network on Governmental Procurement (INGP)

[www.ricg.org](http://www.ricg.org)

This network is made up of the highest authorities in government procurement in the Americas. The directors receive support from the network in the form of information, training, funding, technical assistance, and exchanges of experiences.

### Efficient and Transparent Municipalities (MuNET)

[www.munet.org](http://www.munet.org)

Support to the municipalities of the region in their efforts to incorporate ITCs through a comprehensive work plan that includes awareness-raising, training, consulting, and technology.

### Cadastre Project

[www.catastros.org](http://www.catastros.org)

Supports agencies responsible for land ownership records in Latin American and the Caribbean through training workshops, consulting, and implementation of projects for modernizing cadastres.

### Virtual Campus

[www.campusvirtualoea.org](http://www.campusvirtualoea.org)

Strengthens the capacity of Latin American and Caribbean public institutions through its 22 on-line training courses on topics related to a knowledge-based society and the modernization of the public sector.

With the support of the Inter-American Development Bank, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and the Canadian Agency for International Development (CIDA), the e-government initiatives mentioned above have achieved the following results:

- 550 mayors and municipal authorities trained
- 70 municipal e-government portals launched
- 8,000 public officials trained and certified
- More than 50 exchanges facilitated between experts
- 20 e-government projects implemented



- E-government municipal community created ([www.muniredes.org](http://www.muniredes.org))
- E-government research community created
- More e-government plans in the region and growth in the allocation of financial resources to implement them
- First Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of E-Government organized by the OAS in May 2009 and sponsored by the Government of Uruguay and the IDRC





# Multidimensional Security and Today's Challenges

“We can no longer ignore the crucial impact that the increase in violence and transnational organized crime, in particular, will have on our future.”

**José Miguel Insulza, OAS Secretary General,  
OAS General Assembly, San Salvador, El Salvador  
June 5, 2011**

The growing phenomenon of organized crime, which affects and concerns all citizens of the Americas, is one of the challenges the region faces today. Transnational organized crime, the world drug problem, corruption, money laundering, illegal arms trafficking, terrorism, trafficking in persons, antipersonnel landmines—these problems and the connections among them constitute some of the threats, concerns, and other types of challenges that affect the security of the hemisphere's states.

Through its Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, the OAS aims to become a focal point for developing cooperation and strengthening the states' capacity in areas related to security. With this idea in mind, the Organization promotes cooperation among the member states—and between them and the inter-American system, along with other agencies in the international system—in order to evaluate, prevent, confront, and respond to security threats.

The Secretariat for Multidimensional Security was created in 2005. Its direct forerunner is the Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted by the OAS member states during the 2003 Special Conference on Security. It established, among other things, the multidimensional concept of security and the principle that the basis and purpose of security is the protection of human beings. The declaration represents a major step forward in the recognition of the multidimensional nature of conflicts that arise in the area of hemispheric security. It marks a joint effort to confront the threats and at the same time address the causes of those threats.





## MAS Central America: Immediate Security Support

The OAS General Secretariat recently proposed to the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System (SICA) an initiative called the “Mission to Support the Central American Security Strategy”—MAS Central America for short—as an immediate response to the multiple and complex security challenges in that region.

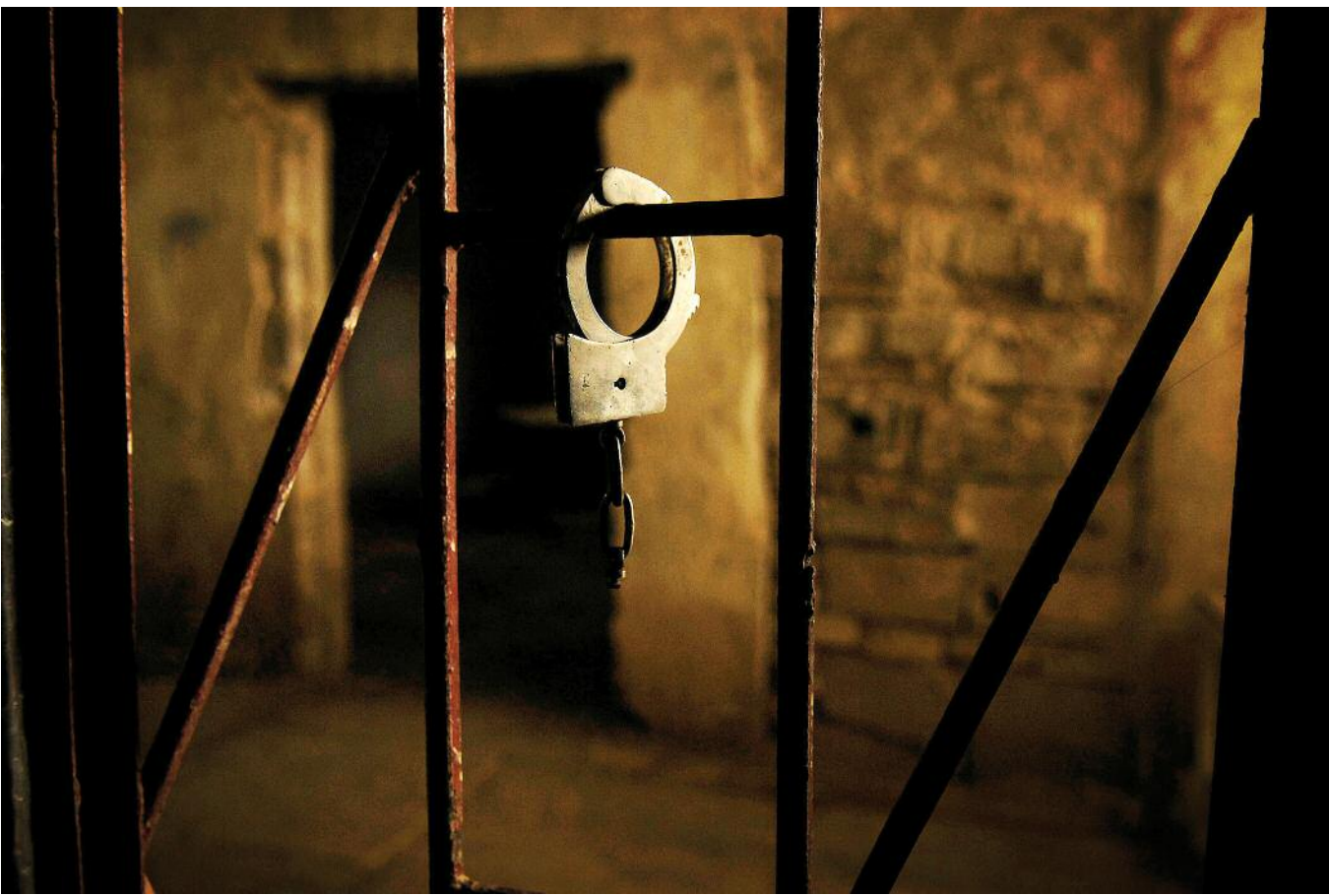
The initiative stems from an OAS General Assembly resolution that instructed the General Secretariat to support the initiatives that Central American countries may present in relation to the Central American Security Strategy, and to respond to the request for international cooperation made in Guatemala in June 2011 by the SICA governments.

The support mission is expected to operate from and in agreement with the SICA General Secretariat headquarters in El Salvador, and to carry out its activities throughout Central America, beginning with a first phase in Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. The plan is for MAS Central America activities, projects, and programs to be developed with support from the aforementioned states and from others in the international community, as well as from institutions and agencies for international cooperation.

MAS Central America proposes to develop a cooperation program which in its initial phase will be geared toward strengthening security-related institutions in the aforementioned states; creating the conditions needed to facilitate the reintegration into society of individuals who agree to separate themselves from groups responsible for violence and crime; encouraging efforts to restore the social fabric in communities affected by crime and violence; and providing opportunities for collaboration among the four states in order to confront a shared problem. The mission’s programs and projects will be undertaken exclusively by request and in agreement with the governments of the countries in which they would be carried out.

The substantive part of MAS Central America’s operations will be done in the communities most affected by violence and crime; these will be identified jointly by the GS/OAS, the GS/SICA, and the governments of Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, in the initial phase. In order to immediately implement the initiative, it has been proposed that GS/OAS activities, programs, and projects that are already being carried out, that are related to the mission’s mandate, and that support the Central American Security Strategy become part of MAS Central America.





## A New Strategy on Drugs: Treatment as an Alternative to Incarceration

While the last few years have brought significant gains in terms of dismantling the production and flow of illegal drugs, more must be done to reduce the alarming levels of drug consumption in the hemisphere—a problem that imposes a high social and economic cost on society. Various studies have noted an underlying connection between substance abuse and crime. Eighty percent of people in prison have a history of drug abuse, and half are addicts. Even more alarming, approximately 80 percent of drug users commit crimes again once they are released from prison, while 95 percent of addicted prisoners suffer relapses once they are released.

The OAS member states recently adopted the 2011–2015 Hemispheric Action Plan on Drugs. In line with the 2010 Hemispheric Anti-Drug Strategy, this plan will help develop comprehensive policies based on the recognition of the world drug program as a complex phenomenon with important political, economic, social, and

environmental aspects, one that must be addressed through a multidimensional approach. The strategy bases its recommendations on the observance of human rights, and recognizes that drug dependence is a chronic, relapsing disease which must be treated as an important component of public health policies. Like diabetes, hypertension, or asthma, it is a disease that requires appropriate medical treatment to address the underlying causes.

Among its recommendations, the OAS drug strategy promotes treatment as an alternative to incarceration for addicts who commit minor offenses. This includes establishing drug courts in which recovery is closely supervised by a judge, who has the authority to reward progress in treatment or punish relapses. The OAS has launched a program to help establish these drug courts in several countries. In addition

to judges, drug courts rely on the experience of prosecutors, defenders, health professionals, and police officers, who contribute their expertise to rehabilitate individuals and reintegrate them into the community. This approach has proved to be successful in reducing relapses in drug consumption and criminal recidivism.

Unfortunately, appropriate treatment options are lacking in most of the hemisphere. In this regard, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD, for its acronym in Spanish), a specialized OAS agency, is successfully training counselors and therapists in drug treatment to help them in their field of specialization, in order to improve the quality of services available across Latin America and the Caribbean. To that end, the OAS is helping universities incorporate addiction-related studies in the curriculums of schools teaching medicine, nursing, public health, and law, so as to ensure that the young people graduating in these fields are knowledgeable about the issue.

By progressively reducing dependence among users of hard drugs, CICAD programs not only help reduce demand for drugs, but also affect the bottom line of the transnational criminal organizations that threaten the economy, the security, and the democratic system of government in the hemisphere. This multilateral approach is essential to successfully address the complex, dynamic drug problem.







## A State Mechanism to Control Drug Trafficking and Abuse

The creation of a Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) grew out of a proposal of the Second Summit of the Americas, in 1998. The aim was to draw up periodic recommendations to the member states so as to improve their capacity to control drug trafficking and abuse and reinforce multilateral cooperation. The states opted for a singular, objective governmental evaluation process, of a multilateral nature, within the framework of CICAD. The MEM's main objective is to directly strengthen mutual confidence, dialogue, and hemispheric cooperation to deal more effectively confront the various aspects of the drug problem.

The MEM identifies the strengths, weaknesses, progress, and setbacks of anti-drug policies and programs in each

member state and in the hemisphere as a whole, so the countries can respond more effectively to the drug problem. It also helps countries generate internal support to fight the drug problem and stimulates change and development of drug control systems. The mechanism also offers countries the opportunity to request technical or financial assistance or training to implement assigned recommendations.

The MEM assesses the anti-drug activities that are carried out by the 34 CICAD member states. This is done through the preparation of national and hemispheric reports to evaluate progress in drug control. The reports produced through this process are written by a multidisciplinary Governmental Expert Group, which guarantees the objectivity and the multilateral component of the MEM.

The evaluation process is structured in rounds; currently the MEM is in its Fifth Evaluation Round, 2006-2009. During this round, progress achieved in drug control policies and actions during those years is evaluated and is compared to previous rounds. Reports and recommendations are produced on the progress made by each country and by the hemisphere in treating all aspects of the drug problem. The information is obtained from the country responses to the 50 indicators that make

up the MEM Questionnaire of Indicators. Reports are also prepared on compliance with the recommendations assigned during the full evaluation phase, keeping in mind the Hemispheric Anti-Drug Strategy and international agreements and instruments in force. A MEM section was established within the CICAD Executive Secretariat to coordinate all MEM activities and to provide technical support to everyone involved in the process.

"We will increase our efforts to prevent and combat all aspects of the global drug problem and related crimes, with strengthened international cooperation and an integral and balanced approach based on the principle of common and shared responsibility . . . To this end, we will strengthen our national capacities and will continue to implement, as appropriate, the recommendations of the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM)."

*Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, Fifth Summit of the Americas. Trinidad and Tobago, 2009*







## Mine-Free Central America: A Victory for Peace

Following nearly twenty years of intensive work, Central America achieved the singular distinction of becoming the first mine-free sub region in the world: Nicaragua became the last Central American nation to complete this seemingly impossible mission in May 2010. This culminated an effort launched in 1991, when the OAS created a program to respond to requests for humanitarian demining assistance from Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala. As these countries struggled to overcome the impact of antipersonnel mines left from armed conflicts, the OAS coordinated a multi-lateral coalition—comprised of mine-affected States, donor nations, international and non-governmental organizations—to free Central America of antipersonnel mines.

This effort evolved into the Program for Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines (AICMA). An eminently humanitarian program, AICMA has sought to reestablish safe and secure living conditions for affected communities

by reducing the impact from antipersonnel mines and explosive artifacts and by returning cleared land to productive use. As one of its main pillars, AICMA has provided physical and psychological rehabilitation assistance for more than 1,500 landmine victims since 1997. While mine clearance work proceeded, AICMA promoted education and awareness about the dangers of landmines to more than a half a million people living in 1,500 communities in Central America, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. The program also extended its resources to help Suriname complete humanitarian demining in 2005 and to assist Chile in launching a demining program.

AICMA continues to support national mine action programs in Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia. They are leading the coalition to further reduce the number of victims and their suffering while returning affected communities to safe conditions so that all of the Americas will be free of mines.





## OAS Combats Human Trafficking

The United Nations Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, defines trafficking in persons as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”

In 2003, the OAS General Assembly approved a resolution on “Fighting the Crime of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women, Adolescents, and Children,” marking an important step in preventing and combating this crime in the Americas. Among other things, the resolution instructs the OAS General Secretariat to facilitate the exchange of information and to assist OAS member states in addressing this threat.

It is important to differentiate trafficking in persons from human smuggling; the latter refers to transporting an individual across a border in violation of a country’s laws but generally with the consent of the person being transported. While the “victims” or “survivors” of the crime of trafficking have generally been subject to coercion or deceit, human smuggling is usually the result of a voluntary contract between a smuggler and a consumer, carried out with the consumer’s consent and full knowledge. One could say that in the case of human smuggling, the principal source of earnings is the consumer’s payment, while in the case of human trafficking, earnings are derived mainly from the prolonged exploitation of the victim.

The OAS now offers training and assistance to police officials in the countries of the region to prevent and address trafficking in persons. It stresses that trafficking is a modern form of slavery and a violation of the person’s human rights, and often involves commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, and involuntary servitude. For example, the OAS General

Secretariat is currently implementing a program in thirteen English-speaking Caribbean countries to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement, judges, and prosecutors to identify and combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

Among other areas, the program focuses on the distinction between trafficking and smuggling; crime scene management; victim identification, assistance, and protection; standard operating procedures for immigration control; the understanding of a gender perspective within a human rights framework; and how trafficking in persons affects men, women, and children in different ways. The OAS also offers a training course for United Nations peacekeeping forces in five of their training centers in the Americas. It also provides training for consular officials and diplomats in countries of the region before they are assigned to missions abroad.

In 2010, the OAS General Assembly endorsed the Work Plan against Trafficking in Persons in the Western Hemisphere, which had been adopted by the Committee on Hemispheric Security, and urged member states to undertake the activities spelled out in the plan. It also invited other segments of society to support these activities.



### One Youth’s Story

In February 2008, a 16-year-old youth was kidnapped in a country where he had traveled in pursuit of his dream to be an actor. He was a modeling student and had seen an ad in his country of origin for an acting job. He applied and was interviewed, and his immigration documents were arranged for him. He was not the only one; twelve or thirteen young people received similar offers. They traveled in a group and reached their destination. But instead of being taken to a movie set, they were taken to a house where their kidnappers drugged and sexually abused them. It was a trap. The criminal organization that had taken them there followed a script that has become all too common: “You still owe us the money we spent in bringing you here. If you want to see your families someday, you’d better do what we say.”

For four months, the youth was forced to prostitute himself. But he was able to escape and seek help at a nearby church. When he told his story, he was taken to a shelter and support center for trafficking victims. His story is unusual because of the fact that he is male, but the cases of women and children who are sexually exploited around the world today are all too common.



## Border Security: A Central Component of Multidimensional Security

Border security is one of the main concerns of the countries of the Americas. Crimes that cross national borders include trafficking in drugs and illegal weapons, human smuggling and trafficking in persons, commercial piracy, contraband, and practically every activity tied to transnational organized crime and terrorism.

The Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE)—an OAS agency that deals with border security issues—carries out programs in four areas of action: aviation security, maritime security, document security and fraud prevention, and immigration and customs controls.

Of the four areas, the maritime security program is the most extensive. Its main objective is to strengthen member states' capacity to comply with the security requirements of the International Maritime Organization's International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, along with other

international standards on maritime security. CICTE's maritime security program has three elements: workshops on best practices, crisis management exercises, and training in key ports.

The workshops on best practices focus on the issues the countries define as priorities; in 2011, for example, a series of workshops were held on the security of port facilities for cruise ships. Meanwhile, the crisis management exercises aim to promote greater expertise in international procedures and in the cross-sector coordination required in this type of emergency.

With regard to the evaluations and training being carried out in key ports, CICTE evaluates the security procedures and capacities of port facilities in order to identify vulnerable areas and develop a training program tailored to each country's needs.

The aviation security program, meanwhile, aims to build member states' capacity to comply with the standards and security practices established in the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation with respect to safeguarding international civil aviation and its facilities against acts of unlawful interference.

With regard to its document security and fraud prevention efforts, the CICTE Executive Secretariat has developed partnerships with various entities that work in this field in the Americas and around the world. This program has two main areas of focus. The first consists of a series of subregional workshops on best practices in travel document security and identity management; these have been taking place since 2008, in coordination with

INTERPOL and other international organizations. The second area of focus involves training courses related to the detection of fraudulent travel documents.

Finally, CICTE's program on customs and immigration controls offers a series of workshops designed to train people involved in combating drug trafficking, human smuggling, and other types of trafficking, as well as to improve controls when it comes to the movement of persons and items through national airports and border crossings.

"The OAS addresses the hemisphere's security challenges from a global perspective that includes regional, national, and local security problems, and that is why border security is one of our central policy pillars."

—Adam Blackwell,  
OAS Secretary for  
Multidimensional Security





## Firearms Marking: A Step Forward for the Region

Illicit trafficking in firearms produces high human and economic costs in the Americas and is linked to many forms of crime and violence. In fact, the Western Hemisphere is the region of the world with the highest rate of armed violence, with 74% of homicides committed with guns. In this context, combating arms trafficking is a critical area for the OAS in its efforts to strengthen public security and foster peace in the region.

Based on the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA) and in response to other mandates from its political bodies, the OAS General Secretariat focuses on promoting and coordinating cooperation among the countries of the hemisphere—and between them and the inter-American system, along with other agencies in the international system—in order to develop and strengthen the national capacity needed to effectively combat illicit arms trafficking.

CIFTA is the first international instrument of a binding (mandatory) nature on this topic. The purpose of the treaty is to foster the implementation of control measures, including export, import, or transport authorizations or licenses, and to strengthen security at entry points, such as borders and ports, promoting cooperation and the exchange of information among the OAS member states.

In February 2012, Secretary General José Miguel Insulza welcomed the addition of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Panama, and Peru to the group of now twenty countries that have made a commitment to the marking of firearms. The countries that had done so previously are Bahamas, Ecuador, Guatemala, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, Guyana, Grenada, Belize, Uruguay, Paraguay, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Honduras. The OAS General Secretariat will donate the equipment needed for marking firearms and storing related data, and will provide training to the officials in charge of this operation.



These efforts enable the creation of mechanisms to share information and to reinforce control and security measures to prevent firearms from entering the illegal market. Firearms marking helps law enforcement agencies trace weapons recovered at the scene of a crime. This in turn can help to pinpoint where the weapon entered the illegal market, and can help to identify the perpetrator of a crime. The marking of firearms is thus an effective tool in combating illicit arms trafficking in the hemisphere, one that is contemplated in CIFTA decisions. Firearms marking and the exchange of information between the OAS and the states are essential to reduce illicit firearms trafficking and other criminal activities in the region.

“We are convinced that illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials are a threat to security, breed violence, exacerbate conflicts and adversely affect the rule of law.”

—Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain,  
Fifth Summit of the Americas  
Trinidad and Tobago, 2009







# Establishing Legal Frameworks for the Americas

“Our mission is to guard the important ideals of the inter-American system and to act as a repository for the important legal instruments, which thereby allow for the peaceful resolution of disputes.”

**José Miguel Insulza, OAS Secretary General**  
**Conference of Ministers of Defense of the Americas**  
**Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia**  
**November 22, 2010**

## The OAS Legal Area

As the inter-American system began to take shape in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, its pioneers foresaw the need to create a network of common institutions and rules to ensure peace among its member states. They created policies and guidelines to prevent the use of force and promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts in order to strengthen relationships between countries and facilitate trade between private parties. These policies were put in place on a continent that had not experienced the kinds of bloody wars between neighboring countries that had shaken other regions during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

It was here in the Americas that the first regional institutions were established to protect children, women, and indigenous peoples, and to support cooperation in the areas of health and agriculture. From the time of its creation, the OAS has been a place where these kinds of standards and rules could be drafted and, over the years, it

has been the birthplace of new agencies created to defend human rights, fight corruption, and combat drug trafficking.

In the last century and a half, all of the countries of the Americas have participated in building the legal frameworks we have today, and the OAS legal area has been their promoter, defender, and counselor. More than 200 international treaties and 6,000 bilateral cooperation agreements are on file in the OAS Secretariat for Legal Affairs, making it one of the richest legal treasuries in the world.



## A Depository for the Hemisphere's Instruments of International Law

OAS buildings house quite a number of invaluable objects, some better known than others. One lesser known item is a case containing many of the original inter-American treaties signed from the time of the First International American Conference (1889-1890). Successive conferences of this type took place over the years, culminating in the creation of the Organization of American States (OAS), thus the most important document stored in the case is, without a doubt, the original treaty constituting the OAS, adopted in 1948. Anyone who has had the privilege of seeing this document first hand has been a witness to one of the most significant historical artifacts of the legal and institutional development of the inter-American system.

The OAS is also the depository of inter-American conventions and the bilateral cooperation agreements established between the OAS and its member states or other entities. This function is exercised through the General Secretariat and, in particular, the Department of International Law of the Secretariat for Legal Affairs.

For some time now, it has been recognized that international organizations have a very important role in creating international law; the OAS is clearly a paradigm in this sense. The treaties kept in safe-keeping by the Department of International Law are the legal bedrock of the inter-American system and its institutions which are, in turn, the patrimony of every country in the Americas.

Many of the documents held by the OAS Secretariat for Legal Affairs include the instruments adopted after the creation of the OAS in 1948 but, as noted previously, they also go all the way back to 1889 when the American nations gathered for the first time in Washington DC. The first meeting led to a series of conferences which then led to the creation of a system of specialized institutions and a set of legal norms that would define relationships between the countries of the hemisphere and contribute to the progressive development of international law in other parts of the world.

In fact, standards and principles related to the protection of human rights, the defense of democracy, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the legal equality of states, free trade, and respect for the principle of non-intervention were developed in the Americas before they were recognized by the United Nations and they served as models and inspirations for that universal system.

One of the principles of the OAS Charter is that international law is the standard of conduct for states in their reciprocal relations. Faithful to that principle, the OAS has, over time, adopted inter-American conventions that have contributed to developing and fulfilling the essential purposes of the OAS, such as: strengthening the peace and security of the continent, consolidating representative democracy, preventing conflicts, and resolving disputes peacefully, among others. The OAS has also been one of the biggest contributors of model laws on very diverse topics within the framework of the Inter-American Specialized Conferences on Private International Law (CIDIP).

The construction of this legal framework has been the collective task of our peoples and the inter-American institutions they have created. Many actors have participated in this work: the member states in the context of the General Assembly; the Permanent Council and its committees; and other OAS bodies, such as the Inter-American Juridical Committee, which has provided the framework for many of the inter-American conventions developed, and the General Secretariat, which has always provided legal support for the processes of negotiation through its Secretariat for Legal Affairs and, in some cases, has even promoted convention projects, action programs, and model laws.





The Secretariat for Legal Affairs, through its Department of International Law, is also responsible for disseminating information about these legal structures and underpinnings. It does so based on the Inter-American Program for the Development of International Law adopted by the General Assembly in 1997, which charges it with maintaining updated information on its web page about all of the system's treaties and agreements. These instruments can be found on the internet using a simple system that searches by time, topic, and alphabetical order. The web page allows access not only to the official texts of the treaties, but also to information about the current state of signatures, ratifications, and/or accessions, reservations, objections, declarations, and dates when agreements went into effect, etc.

The Department is also responsible for the ongoing organization of courses and seminars on a wide variety of topics related to public and private international law aimed at lawyers, university professors, and law students. These courses are part of its effort to disseminate information about the legal contributions of the inter-American system throughout the hemisphere. In this way, international law is promoted as the standard of conduct among states and spaces are opened for reflection and debate so that the entire community can contribute to the progressive development of international law. All of these activities are described in legal publications that go out to a large number of people who then become the direct recipients of OAS efforts to promote the law.



## Cooperation against Corruption in the Framework of the OAS Convention and it's Follow-up Mechanism (MESICIC)

During the last few years, the OAS has been on the vanguard of international cooperation to combat corruption. Its pioneering role has made significant and useful progress possible, in order to strengthen and consolidate collective action against corruption in the hemisphere, but also to facilitate progress in this area in the context of other international organizations.

The Summits of the Americas—a gathering of heads of state and government—has been a strong promoter of OAS work in cooperation against corruption. In fact, the first of these Summits (Miami, 1994) was a milestone in the field. At that time, the heads of state and government recognized the multilateral nature of corruption and committed to negotiating a hemispheric agreement on the subject in the framework of the OAS. As a result of this decision, and after a long process of analysis and deliberations, the countries of the Americas adopted the Inter-American Convention against Corruption in 1996.

Since then, in each of the Summits, the heads of state and government have made additional decisions facilitating the consolidation of cooperation against corruption in the framework of the OAS Convention. In the Second Summit (Santiago, Chile, 1998), for example, they committed to providing appropriate follow-up on the progress made on the Convention, and this led to the consideration of—and agreement on—a recommendation to create a follow-up mechanism inside the OAS for the implementation of the agreement. In the Third Summit (Quebec, Canada, 2001), they agreed to support “in as short a period of time possible, and taking into



consideration the recommendations of the OAS,” the establishment of the mechanism known as MESICIC, and that mechanism went into effect in 2002. In the Special Summit of the Americas (Monterrey, Mexico, 2004), the leaders agreed to increase cooperation in the framework of the Convention, particularly by strengthening the MESICIC, for which they formulated specific assignments that were developed by the Conference of the States Parties and the General Secretariat of the OAS. In the Fourth Summit (Mar de Plata, Argentina, 2005), they called on countries to implement the Convention and participate fully in that mechanism, and they committed to continue to strengthen it, paying special attention to the recommendations made in the framework of the first round of MESICIC analysis. Finally, at the Fifth Summit (Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 2009) the heads of state and government reaffirmed their commitment to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption.

### • Cooperation against Corruption

The first Convention against Corruption has inspired other agreements with similar goals—such as the UN Convention. It is a comprehensive instrument. It recognizes, first of all, that the struggle against corruption must be understood as a process, not something that is decreed and completed with a single decision or magic solution. Second, it contains both preventive and repressive measures that are both national and international in scope. Third, it is a



strategy with responsibilities that are shared by the states, the private sector, civil society, and the international community.

The creation of MESICIC was a very important step towards making the Convention effective. This inter-governmental mechanism has ample space for civil society participation and it aims to support the states parties as they implement the provisions of the Conventions. MESICIC also serves as a forum for states to exchange information and to cooperate with each other in terms of best practices in the prevention and combat of corruption.

The analysis carried out by MESICIC indicates that it is essential to have institutions, legal frameworks, and public policies in the area of corruption, and that mistakes made on this front can give rise to many of the problems that are considered issues of transparency and personal integrity.

The analysis revealed that some countries do not have the laws, measures, policies, or institutions necessary to combat corruption. When they do exist, they are often insufficient for the purposes of the Convention and, in most countries, it is not possible to evaluate their effectiveness because they do not have indicators that make it possible to measure the results objectively.

Given this situation, all of the member countries of MESICIC, to a lesser or greater degree, have received concrete recommendations from MESICIC aimed at filling the gaps and correct the problems detected.

Many states have received support to develop national action plans to help implement MESICIC recommendations.

In order for the Convention to be used for cooperation in the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of acts of corruption, the Hemispheric Information Exchange Network for Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and Extradition has been made available to the states. This network was created and developed in the process of Meetings of Ministers of Justice or Other Ministers or Attorney Generals of the Americas (REMJA).

Other tools for cooperation have also been made available to the countries, for example: model laws to facilitate and create incentives for reporting acts of corruption and protecting whistleblowers and witnesses; systems in which public office holders can declare their interests, income, assets, and liabilities; legislative guides and systematized legislation; other measures taken by the states in the areas examined by MESICIC; and the Anti-corruption Portal of the Americas on the OAS web page.

These are some of the concrete, useful steps that have been taken to strengthen cooperation against corruption in the Americas. The good news is that all of it contributes to strengthening the states' legal and institutional frameworks for preventing and confronting corruption. This can be seen in the results of the First Progress Report on the Implementation of the Convention adopted by the MESICIC Committee of Experts in 2011.

Without a doubt, one of the most important remaining challenges is to strengthen institutions to such a point that they can effectively enforce the legal standards and measures that have been adopted to combat corruption. In response to this challenge, the Committee of Experts of the MESICIC decided to conduct a fourth round of analysis, which began in September 2011. The idea is to do a comprehensive study of the higher control bodies of our states, so that—as the Convention indicates—they can reach the final goal of developing modern mechanisms to prevent, detect, and eradicate corrupt practices.

Efforts to meet this goal will be reinforced with a new analytical instrument adopted by the Committee in its last meeting after a recommendation from the Third Meeting of the Conference of States Parties to the MESICIC. The instrument in question is the practice of *in situ* visits to the states. These visits have begun and will permit the Committee to see firsthand the actions the states are taking to implement the Convention and the recommendations of MESICIC. Committee members will also learn about the difficulties that may arise with this goal and will be able to recommend the cooperation required.

True to the principle that the fight against corruption is a strategy with shared responsibilities, the Committee adopted a methodology for conducting its *in situ* visits in a way that includes broad spaces for participation by civil society organizations, the private sector, professional

associations, academics, and researchers in order glean useful information for enriching the analysis and strengthening the commitment to the idea that everyone must have a part in solving this problem.

During the last few years, the OAS has been on the vanguard in terms of the road to cooperation against corruption. It is clear that many more miles have yet to be travelled on that road and that the journey will be a continuous one because, while there is a beginning, there is no fixed end. Above all, it is clear that we will continue down this path without turning back.

The decisions adopted by the heads of state and government in the Summits of the Americas, as well as by the General Assembly and the states parties to the Convention, show a clear and forceful commitment to strengthen cooperation and collective action to face this problem which affects all of us.





## Hemispheric Cooperation against Cyber-Crime

Cyber-crimes are posing new challenges to the administration of justice. Therefore, the process of the Meetings of Ministers of Justice or Other Ministers or Attorneys General of the Americas (REMJA) decided to incorporate the topic of international legal cooperation against cyber-crime into its agenda more than a decade ago. That decision has been endorsed by the Summits of the Americas process.

Cyber-crimes are indeed presenting new and challenging problems. They can be committed without considering borders, customs, or check points. They do not require visas or passports. In fact, the material and intellectual authors of the crime do not even have to be located in the country where the crime is committed. This is truly a new generation of crime, a byproduct of the information and technology age. For the reasons mentioned, in many ways, cyber-crimes cannot be treated like

traditional crimes. They are international crimes that create huge legal challenges as well as the need for specialization, training, assistance, and cooperation among states.

Because of the international nature of these crimes, mutual legal cooperation is essential to prevent, investigate, and punish them. Isolated actions by a few states are not enough. In fact, with this kind of crime, one country's vulnerability can end up causing problems for other countries that are connected to it in some way. That's why it is essential for everyone to act together. Without a doubt, cyber-crimes are one of the greatest challenges for international legal cooperation.

In spite of the challenges, a great deal of useful and important progress has been made within the framework of OAS/REMJA to strengthen legal cooperation against cyber-crimes, and the results of this progress can be seen in concrete actions of cooperation to benefit the states.

With the leadership of the chair of the REMJA Working Group on Cyber Crime, under the United States Department of Justice and with the support of cooperation resources from that country, regional training workshops have been held every year without interruption since 2004 in order to develop legislation and strengthen international legal cooperation against cyber-crime. To date, eighteen training workshops have been held in all of the regions of the hemisphere and about 700 government officials with direct responsibilities in these areas have participated.

The usefulness of this work is clear; analyses of the legal-institutional frameworks of the states in the region have shown an urgent need to modernize legislation to permit the effective tracking of cyber-crimes. Various cases have shown that the absence of legislation in this area and deficiencies in existing legislation have led to impunity. The workshops have contributed significantly to the fact that several states have recently adopted measures to update their legal frameworks on the subject and that many others are in the process of doing so.

In response to a recommendation of the REMJA Group on Cyber Crime, and in accordance with the information received from the states in response to a questionnaire distributed in preparation for the that group's last meeting in February 2012, fifteen states now have special units to investigate and prosecute cybercrimes.

The Technical Secretariat of the REMJA has continued to update the Inter-American Cooperation Portal on Cyber-Crime on the OAS webpage, where it is possible to find, among other things: country legislation on cyber-crime duly organized by sub-topic; the recommendations of the Working Group; training manuals; presentations given by experts in training workshops; and directories of points of contact in various areas involving the research and prosecution of cyber crime. Much of the information is public, but another private section has been created to facilitate the exchange of sensitive information between states with the security required.

An assessment of cyber-crime in the region shows that progress has been made on fundamental issues of investigation and punishment. For instance, illicit access and illicit interception are now officially classified and on the books as crimes. In addition, electronic evidence has been ruled admissible in the courts, data has been obtained and conserved, and special units for the investigation and prosecution of these kinds of criminal activities have been created.

More work has been done to strengthen information exchange and cooperation with other organizations and international agencies that work on cyber-crime, like the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Forum for Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the G-8, the Commonwealth, and INTERPOL.

The REMJA Group on Cyber Crime has also worked to facilitate and consolidate cooperation among authorities responsible for the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of cyber-crimes related to the private sector, especially with providers of information and communications technology services, in particular Internet services.

As the states have agreed in the framework of REMJA, more progress must be made to strengthen the legal framework of the states on this subject. It must be done in a harmonious way and in a way that will not work against equally legitimate interests that have to do with access to information, copyrights, and due protection for privacy.







## Inter-American Program of Judicial Facilitators

Maria Zoraida Cabrera de Medina, 54, is the Judicial Facilitator of the “Compañía Calle” Department of Paraguari in Paraguay. She says she is proud to play that role because she helps the population gain access to justice.

“The best reward is that I get to help my community,” she says with great feeling. “It gives me a lot of satisfaction to know that I can help prevent certain conflicts between two or more people.”

Cabrera is one of the 4,388 people who are part of the National Service of Judicial Facilitators that promote the services of the judicial branch in Paraguay with the support of the Inter-American Program of Judicial Facilitators sponsored by the OAS Secretariat for Legal Affairs in the region.

This judicial program has allowed vulnerable populations to have access to justice and to find peaceful solutions to their differences.

Cabrera believes the service has been very helpful. “It has helped me grow as a person. It has given me instruction and trained me so I can better help those who seek my assistance. The program is a service option that benefits me and my community,” she says.

Judicial facilitators are women and men, volunteer leaders at the service of the justice system. They help judges with certain processes like mediation, summons, and inspections, among others. They also give talks and advise on various laws and, when necessary, they accompany people with various procedures and paperwork in the system.

Judicial facilitators also disseminate civic and legal information to the population. Their work is preventative in that they reduce the levels of crime and conflict, contributing in this way to social peace.

OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza says that this service “is a mechanism for administering justice that aids the weakest sectors of society, helping them to resolve their differences and providing alternative solutions before the conflicts reach the ordinary justice system.”

This model for improving access to justice began in Nicaragua in the late 1990s as a conflict prevention and resolution alternative in remote rural areas, and it expanded quickly into urban and suburban areas of the country. Between 2007 and 2011, agreements were signed between the OAS and the Supreme Courts of Justice of Argentina, Guatemala, Panama, and Paraguay to establish the Service.

Currently, facilitators have performed more than 10,000 assists to judicial authorities and 25,000 prevention services, including mediations within the local legal framework. They have also providing civil-legal information to over 100,000 people.

The Service of Judicial Facilitators contributes to the promotion of human rights and democratic governance, increasing access to justice and contributing to poverty reduction through the mechanism of citizen participation. This is especially helpful for vulnerable groups such as women who are victims of violence,

persons living with disabilities, populations with high levels of poverty, people who live in isolated rural areas, and indigenous peoples.







# The OAS Promotes Development in the Americas

“Working together, we will continue to forge the path toward the Americas we dream of and know we can achieve, where the day-to-day existence of all its people is consistent with the hemisphere’s enormous potential, in an ongoing effort to redress existing inequities and inequality.”

José Miguel Insulza, OAS Secretary General  
*Américas Magazine*  
October, 2011

Reducing poverty and inequality is one of the central pillars of the work of the Organization of American States (OAS). Through its Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI), the OAS promotes collaboration among the countries in areas related to social, economic, sustainable, and human development. The OAS organizes regular ministerial and other high-level meetings in which leading authorities from the countries discuss the outlook for the region, new challenges, and steps they can take to make improvements in education; competitiveness and innovation; micro, small, and medium-sized businesses; tourism; social protection; jobs and employment; and sustainable energy, among other topics.

SEDI designs and implements programs and projects in more than 25 work areas to strengthen the OAS member states’ human and institutional capacity. It also supports some twenty inter-American collaborative networks in which authorities

and technical experts from the countries participate and share ideas in specialized areas of work. These networks are mechanisms that parallel and monitor political processes underway in the region, and promote the identification and exchange of experiences and good practices. They also facilitate horizontal collaboration between sectors and institutions, and support capacity-building in key development areas. Participating in a network involves sharing knowledge and experience, a process that leads to a better understanding of the roles, competencies, needs, and abilities of the individuals and institutions that work to help shape public policies.



## Educational Development in the Americas



More children and youth in the hemisphere have access to education than ever before, but quality and equity remain very serious challenges. Indeed, regional data (Latin America and the Caribbean) show that completion rates of secondary school for inhabitants of rural areas, poorer social sectors, and members of ethnic groups remain very low, reaching only 50% in certain countries. Many countries also lack sufficient numbers of qualified teachers. If the region is to meet its goals of reducing poverty and inequity, enhancing economic growth and competitiveness, strengthening democracy, and promoting a good quality of life for all its citizens, it must improve education. Two programs of the Office of Education and Culture of the OAS are designed to help address this challenge: the Inter-American Teacher Education Network (ITEN) and the Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices.

### Inter-American Teacher Education Network (ITEN)

The Inter-American Teacher Education Network (ITEN) is a professional network of leaders in education in the hemisphere aimed at sharing knowledge, experiences, research, and good practices in the field of teacher education. Based on a strategy of collaboration among countries, ITEN provides a space for interaction to all teachers and stakeholders in the region. To maximize its reach, the ITEN community features a web page, a YouTube Channel, a Facebook page, and a Twitter account.

Despite the relative novelty of the program, ITEN's success is undeniable: in its first year of operation (2011), ITEN reached a total of 28,008 unique visits on its Virtual Community. In addition, sixteen forums and ten blogs in both English and Spanish were created to stimulate discussion and share experiences. Articles are often complementary to the themes touched on during the webinars, serving either as preparatory lectures or simply as food for thought following the webinars.

Finally, ITEN offers a series of online courses for "Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers with Web 2.0 Tools and 21st Century Skills." So far, 488 teacher educators (trainers of future teachers) benefited from these online courses given in both English and Spanish. Since each of them will reach 50 professionals who then share their knowledge with their students—tomorrow's teachers, ITEN will have reached 24,400 prospective teachers in the Americas this year.

### Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices

The Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices aims to develop and/or strengthen a culture of democracy in the Americas through formal and informal education. Coordinated by the Office of Education and Culture of the OAS, the Program has three modalities: Cooperation and Information Exchange, Research and Analysis, and Professional Development and Education Resources.

The Program's Horizontal Cooperation Fund for Technical Assistance Missions in the area of education for democratic citizenship promotes the sharing of good practices and provision of technical assistance among institutions in different member states. Thus far, nineteen cooperation projects have benefited from the fund, which supports technical assistance missions selected through a competitive process. In 2011, ten cooperation projects were selected, benefiting 31 institutions from 12 member states.

Among the projects was *Aulas de Paz* (Classrooms in Peace), a project that brought the experience of a program by the same name in Colombia. The project aimed to promote non-violent behavior in schools of the municipalities of Nuevo Leon, in Northern Mexico, where relations among students, and between teachers and students, were reported to be tense. During the two years of implementation (2009–2010), six public schools in four municipalities of Nuevo Leon saw their level of violence decrease, through the training of 25 teachers and school authorities. According to the director of one of the schools, Ricardo Flores Magón Escobedo, "Changes were noticeable during recess

time . . . Students who had frequent fights or abused or intimidated small or shy students showed significant changes and adopted more peaceful behaviors. Also, major incidents were less frequent and when they happened, they were easier to resolve."

The Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices also offers online courses for teachers, school administrators, and policy makers to improve the quality of citizenship education, introduce democratic values in schools, and help teachers to transform their classrooms into more democratic spaces. One successful course, "Education for Democratic Citizenship in the Caribbean: An Online Course for Educators," was offered online in cooperation with the University of the West Indies Open Campus. In total 250 teachers from six countries participated. Overall, with 1,000 teachers and teacher educators trained, it is estimated that potentially some 30,000 teachers have been affected by the new knowledge and skills acquired by their teachers through these courses.

### Scholarship Programs

OAS scholarship and training programs have supported the development goals of the member states with respect to human capacity. Since its creation, the program has granted more than 100,000 scholarships to emerging leaders, working professionals, and experts from around the Americas, contributing to the development of human resources by capitalizing on the accumulated knowledge and experience of the OAS member countries. OAS scholarships not only help prepare individuals; they also promote solidarity and mutual understanding in the region based on shared democratic values, peace, and sustainable development.

Today the program includes the OAS University Consortium, a network of more than 130 universities in nineteen countries that are continually implementing new technologies to provide the best

educational opportunities for students. These efforts have made it possible for the programs to offer opportunities to professionals in a broad range of educational fields and specialties. Participants have included artists, architects, builders, politicians, lawyers, professionals, and engineers, among others. The Professional Development Scholarship Program has granted scholarships for students and professionals to receive specialized training in their particular field of development.

The Educational Portal of the Americas, launched in September 2001, is a tool to strengthen development through the use of information and communications technologies, innovation, quality education, and social inclusion. It provides a key to further professional training, strengthen institutions, and promote local development in communities. The OAS General Secretariat's Leo S. Rowe Pan American Fund was established to provide interest-free financial assistance in the form of loans to citizens from Latin American and Caribbean member countries who study or would like to study in the United States.

OAS scholarship programs not only provide student beneficiaries with opportunities of a lifetime; they also have a multiplier effect throughout society. Many recipients have gone on to have a major impact in their country or in the region, whether in government, business, education, or some other field.







## Inter-American Social Protection Network (RIPSO)

At the Fifth Summit of the Americas, held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009, the heads of state and government expressed their concern over the high levels of poverty and inequality in the hemisphere and reaffirmed the need to make significant progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Toward that end, they supported the creation of the Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN) as a tool to exchange knowledge, policies, and lessons learned in the area of social protection.

### Reducing Poverty and Inequality

According to the Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), some 30% of the region's population falls below the poverty line. Income distribution in Latin American countries is known to be among the most unequal in the world: 40% of the population with the lowest income accounts for just 15% of national income, while the 10% of the population in the highest tier takes in a third of total income.

The Inter-American Social Protection Network facilitates the exchange of programs that make a significant impact in reducing poverty and inequality. Such is the case of Brazil's *Bolsa Família* program, which is credited with 15% of the improvement in that country's Gini index—a measure of inequality—between 1999 and 2009. The program is also credited with a 12% reduction of the poverty gap between 2001 and 2005. What's especially remarkable is that this was achieved at a cost in 2010 of only 0.4% of GDP.

Source: ILO (2011)

The OAS launched the IASPN in September 2009 as a tool for South-South cooperation—a community of practice and learning. The network facilitates interaction among the countries' ministries of social development and other government agencies, as well as international agencies, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and the private sector.

The following strategic pillars allow members of the IASPN to successfully exchange experiences and knowledge:

- *High-level Political Dialogue:* The IASPN has the political support of the countries of the region, through the Summit of the Americas process and the OAS General Assembly. The region's Ministers of Social Development Forum provides direction and oversight to the IASPN. This means that the network reflects the needs and priorities established at the highest levels of government.
- *Intersectoral Approach:* Given its multidimensional nature, social protection requires effective cooperation to implement public policies. Such cooperation spans different sectors—including education, health, and labor—as well as the various government agencies involved in social protection at the local, national, and regional level.
- *Inter-American Approach:* Through the IASPN, countries in the Americas can improve cooperation on social protection, whether at the bilateral or multilateral level. The OAS has been working to identify successful methodologies and develop effective mechanisms to promote cooperation among countries. This involves a horizontal, rather than aid-

driven, model of cooperation. The OAS facilitates cooperation links, systematizes lessons learned, and disseminates these experiences among the broader IASPN community.

- *Collaboration Among International Agencies:* The OAS is coordinating social protection efforts with other international agencies working in this field, in order to incorporate their specialized focus on decent work, gender equality, and human development, among other areas. The idea is to encourage synergy, expand collaboration, and avoid duplication of efforts. The IASPN has established inter-agency partnerships with UNICEF, ECLAC, the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization, and the Pan American Health Organization.

- *Public-Private Partnerships:* By engaging civil society, academia, and the private sector in IASPN activities, the OAS aims to promote complementary efforts and collaboration among different sectors. Along these lines, it has established agreements with the Inter-American Foundation and the *Fundación América Solidaria*.

Thanks to the contributions of the governments of the United States, Chile, Canada, and the People's Republic of China, as well as the World Bank, during its first two years the IASPN has had positive results. It has managed to involve more than 570 professionals at all levels and in different sectors in seven in-person

activities and three virtual forums. In addition, it established eight formal inter-agency collaboration initiatives with six international organizations, and four public-private partnerships. Twenty documents prepared by the IASPN Technical Secretariat have also been published online.

### Puente in the Caribbean

The Puente in the Caribbean Program began in June 2007 with the aim of strengthening social protection strategies in the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean, using Chile's Puente Program (Bridge Program) as a model. The seeds for this initiative were planted in the form of a pilot program begun with Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Chile. In 2009, the program was expanded to incorporate four new countries: Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname. During the second phase, the countries continued to receive technical assistance in implementing the lessons learned in the Puente Program and in carrying out the programs that had been adapted to meet local needs.

### Diploma in Social Protection

In an effort to meet countries' demand for training, the OAS and the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile organized the first Diploma Course in Social Protection in the Americas, as a first effort to implement IASPN educational and sharing tools. The purpose of the exercise was to gain an

overview of the principal debates and perspectives on social protection and its implementation in the Americas; identify the achievements and gaps in social protection in the countries of the region; analyze the impact of the various social protection instruments in reducing poverty and inequality; and acquire conceptual and methodological tools to improve the design, management, or evaluation of social protection policies.

Thirty professionals put forward by Social Development Ministries or similar agencies in fifteen OAS member countries took the online courses, through the "UC Virtual" platform, via modules on social protection, vulnerability, poverty, and inequality.

The in-person portion of the course took place in Chile in January 2012 and focused on the study of mechanisms to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate social protection programs. During the two weeks, students had the opportunity to share their personal and professional experiences in these areas, participate in workshops created specifically to apply the various tools that had been presented in class, and learn from panels of professionals from the Chilean social protection system. The students also had the opportunity to interact with special guests from ECLAC and J-PAL Latin America, the regional office of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab.

### Looking to the Future

In October 2011, the OAS received an additional grant from the United States for the Inter-American Social Protection Network, in recognition of what has become a priority task for the OAS. The funds will help the IASPN develop an ambitious work plan for the 2012–2014 period, which is expected to include strengthening the activities mentioned above and introducing new tools and perspectives. The goal is to make the IASPN one of the main platforms for cooperation and social protection and a forum to facilitate information exchange in this field.





# Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC)



The OAS created the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC) in 2009 with the conviction that competitiveness transcends national borders and can be strengthened through regional collaboration. Through their development agendas and competitiveness strategies, the countries of the region are working to improve the quality of life for their citizens and ensure sustainable growth for their economies. Along these lines, RIAC supports the countries by enabling them to engage in a fluid, ongoing dialogue among authorities and competitiveness councils, and facilitates the exchange of experiences and good practices among institutions so that they can share common challenges.



## Results of RIAC Support

The dialogue between national authorities and the region's competitiveness councils was instituted as a formal part of the annual Americas Competitiveness Forum, the most important regional event on the subject. Today, the forum and the RIAC network coordinate activities to help the region become more competitive, innovative, and prosperous.

Ten general competitiveness principles were defined and approved by consensus by the national authorities and competitiveness councils of the hemisphere, at the 2011 RIAC Annual Meeting in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The principles are part of the "Consensus of Santo Domingo," and serve as a point of reference for efforts the countries are carrying out domestically, as well as for RIAC actions at a regional level. The principles are:

1. Promote high-quality education
2. Foster the establishment of effective institutions
3. Promote a simpler, more stable, and efficient institutional and regulatory framework
4. Prioritize the development of human capital
5. Foster the development of a modern, efficient, and well-maintained infrastructure, between and within countries
6. Position innovation and high-impact entrepreneurship as a determining factor for competitiveness

7. Improve access to capital for economic actors, especially MSMEs
8. Foster equity, inclusion, social entrepreneurship, and the adoption and application of corporate social responsibility principles
9. Promote trade and integration
10. Promote energy efficiency and development

The OAS member states created a mechanism to measure countries' progress in competitiveness. Their progress and experience vis-à-vis the ten competitiveness principles will be summarized in an annual report called "Signals of Competitiveness in the Americas."

The Americas Competitiveness Observatory ([www.RiacNet.org](http://www.RiacNet.org)) was created. The observatory enables the countries to share and draw attention to their competitiveness initiatives, projects, and agendas. It also provides information on the latest available reports and studies, and provides an updated directory of institutions responsible for competitiveness policies in the countries. Visits to the observatory have increased significantly, from 2,777 in May 2010 to more than 70,000 visits in November 2011.

More than ten studies on good practices and successful experiences were published and distributed in the region on issues related to renewable energy, innovation in services, trade facilitation, and the climate for business and entrepreneurship. Training has been provided for more than 200 officials from Caribbean countries in order to strengthen the institutional capacity of entities that promote competitiveness. The workshops were held through the "Compete Caribbean" Program in Atlanta in 2010 and in Santo Domingo in 2011, in the framework of RIAC annual meetings.

# Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL)

To better equip these ministries, and with the understanding that cooperation is a means to strengthen institutions, the network has sought to strengthen the ties between labor agencies; identify, systematize, and disseminate knowledge and experiences; foster the transfer of lessons learned and technical assistance among Labor Ministries, employers, and workers; and facilitate communication and coordination among labor agencies, social actors, and international organizations.



## • Direct Bilateral Technical Assistance:

Through open competitions, the network funds cooperation and technical assistance activities among Labor Ministries. These activities make it possible to learn about a particular practice on the ground or to receive training from experts. They include direct, customized advice with content tailored to the interests and needs of the participating ministries. To date, 59 bilateral activities have taken place among 28 Labor Ministries, benefiting more than 700 officials.

• **Technical Studies and Documents:** These are publications that add value to RIAL activities, providing useful ideas on current issues, analyzing successful policies and programs, and providing policy recommendations.

• **Newsletters, Websites, and Virtual Forums:** These virtual communications tools provide current information and make it easier for network members to discuss specific issues and communicate in ways that are more agile.



One of the most significant steps the OAS has taken to advance labor issues has been to establish the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL), which has strengthened institutional capacity within Labor Ministries and has had an impact on their operations, policies, and programs. This network was created by the ministries themselves as a mechanism par excellence for cooperation among institutions. This effort has received the support of the OAS General Assembly and is in keeping with the Summit of the Americas commitment to enhanced hemispheric cooperation.

The RIAL network was created to strengthen the institutional and human capacity of the region's Labor Ministries, recognizing that they are under constant pressure as a result of the economic and social transformations brought by globalization; demands for greater productivity; labor challenges related to unemployment, underemployment, and informal employment; and in general, the shortage of decent jobs.

## RIAL Tools

The Inter-American Network for Labor Administration functions as a system comprised of tools that reinforce each other:

• **Portfolio of Programs:** This database systematizes the programs offered by the Ministries of Labor of the Americas, facilitates horizontal cooperation, and provides an updated hemispheric overview. It currently includes more than 120 programs.

• **Hemispheric Workshops:** These provide opportunities to exchange and analyze experiences; maintain a technical dialogue among Labor Ministries, employers, workers, international organizations, and civil society; and identify lessons learned and policy recommendations. To date, fifteen workshops of this nature have been held on priority labor-related subjects, with the participation of more than 900 individuals.

## Selected RIAL Impacts

• Paraguay's Office of Social Security—created in late 2008 within the Ministry of Justice and Labor—improved its procedures and institutional structure following a cooperation activity with Chile.

• A program in Argentina to promote the quantity and quality of youth employment (*Programa Jóvenes con Más y Mejor Trabajo*) incorporated new management elements following a visit by its managers to the United States.

• Training programs for inspectors in Panama were redesigned as a result of receiving technical assistance from Brazil.

• The Department of Social Organizations in Costa Rica was modernized with technical assistance from Mexico.

"The Consensus of Santo Domingo and its ten general competitiveness principles are very important for the economies of all countries in the region."

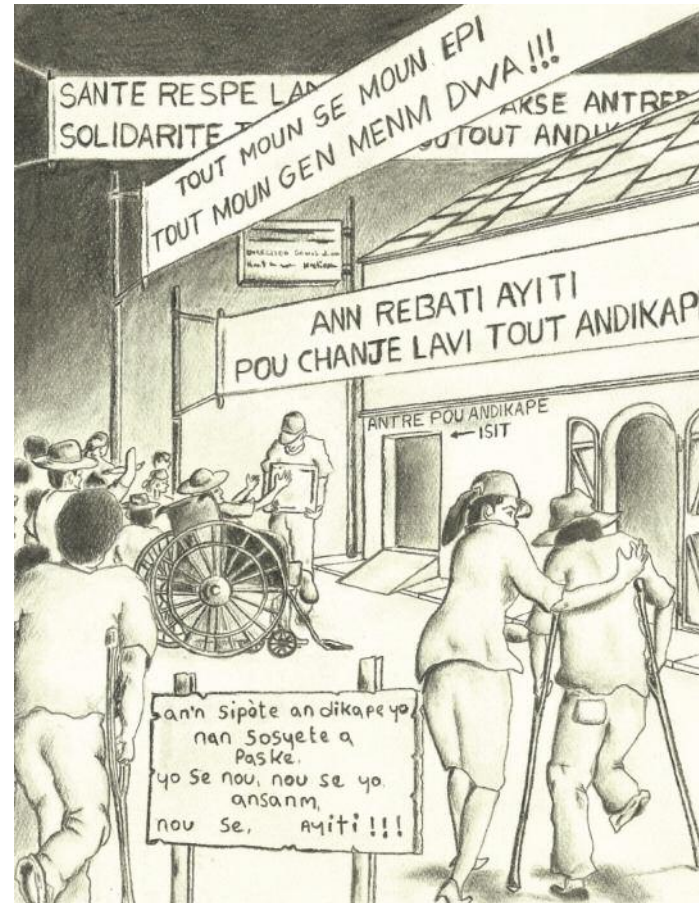
—Juan Manuel Santos, President of Colombia



- Guatemala restructured its system for collecting information to generate labor statistics based on lessons it learned from Argentina.

RIAL priorities are continually being determined by its members, in line with their most pressing labor priorities. Thus, activities have included analyzing and exchanging experiences in the area of work inspection; the labor dimension of free trade agreements; employment services; health and occupational safety; and youth employment, among other key labor issues.

The Inter-American Network for Labor Administration was initially funded by the Canadian Labour Program; this enabled the network to be set up and provided a chance for participants to appreciate its benefits. Since 2010, the network has been financed through a Voluntary Fund with member contributions. The members' decision to establish the fund shows the value they attribute to this mechanism, which will continue to be strengthened to the benefit of government labor agencies and millions of workers in the region.



## Social Inclusion

### Strengthening Capacity in Haiti to Promote Social Inclusion and Integration of Persons with Disabilities

The Department of Social Development and Employment seeks to strengthen social institutions in the hemisphere to bring about more effective policies that address the challenges of social inclusion, equity, and well-being for all—understanding that a more equitable and inclusive hemisphere is conducive to strengthening democratic governance, hemispheric security, and respect for human rights. The Department of Social Development and Employment's efforts include a capacity-building program in Haiti to promote the social inclusion and integration of people with disabilities.

This program offers technical assistance to government ministries in the areas of health and social welfare by: (a) developing a strategy to strengthen the implementation of norms, policies, and programs; (b) improving the Haitian legal framework in this area; (c) creating synergies with the work being done by

civil society; and (d) generating a Cooperation Network for Haiti, made up of disability experts in the region from national agencies in OAS member countries and international agencies that will offer ongoing technical advice.

This initiative began in 2012, building on the gains made in implementing the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Program (2009–2011), which was carried out jointly with USAID. Among other things, that program proposed specific provisions for the Law on the Integration of Persons with Disabilities (which has already been approved by the Chamber of Deputies) and completed two studies as part of efforts to draft a Building Code for universal accessibility. The new initiative has received more than US\$2 million in financial support from USAID and will be carried out over the next three years. It also receives support from the member states through the network of experts.

## Energy and the Environment

The Organization of American States, through the Department of Sustainable Development of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development, provides technical assistance and cooperation to the countries of the Americas in the field of biodiversity; natural disaster risk management; environmental law, policy and good governance, and integrated water resources management. In the field of energy and climate change, the Department of Sustainable Development has been assisting the governments of the Americas in orchestrating policies and programs to address the challenge of supplying abundant, reliable energy while curbing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting the environment.

Much more that can be done to increase the sustainability of the energy sector throughout the Americas. Many gains in efficiency and sharing of resources can be achieved through interconnection and cooperation between countries of the hemisphere. Although many indigenous resources may be geographically exclusive to a certain area or country, they may be shared by several sister nations by means of interconnections. For example, geothermal electricity from Saint Kitts and Nevis may someday feed into the electric grid of other Caribbean islands such as Puerto Rico. Grid connected renewable energy plants can supply the Central American Electric Interconnection System (SIEPAC). There is great potential to link Central America with South America as

well. The Energy and Climate Change Mitigation Section of the OAS Department of Sustainable Developments aims precisely at deploying such solutions. The ultimate goal of the OAS energy program is to expand renewable energy and foster regional-level energy integration to provide Latin America and the Caribbean with abundant energy—the most fundamental tool for progress—while curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Department of Sustainable Development provides continuing support to the countries of the Americas in the design and implementation of sustainable energy policies, strategies, programs, and projects to enable the governments to meet the energy needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own energy needs. The Department of Sustainable Development currently operates the Clearinghouse of the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA). This Partnership, launched at the Fifth Summit of the Americas in 2009, seeks to increase collaboration among the governments of the Americas to drive the energy and climate change debate towards tangible actions that yield viable solutions to pressing needs. ECPA addresses seven main themes or pillars: energy efficiency, renewable energy, cleaner and more efficient use of fossil fuels, energy infrastructure, energy poverty, sustainable forests and land use, and adaptation. In the Caribbean region, ECPA is assisting governments in designing and implementing sustainable energy policies, programs and projects. The program fosters regional dialogue on long-term sustainable energy solutions such as the potential for electricity interconnections between and among islands of the Caribbean. Also, ECPA is implementing a fellows program intended to send technical experts from the academic, non-profit or private sectors to serve as consultants and speakers to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, sharing best practices and expertise in clean energy, sustainable urban development, climate change adaptation and reducing emissions from deforestation. Another example of hemispheric cooperation under the auspices of ECPA is the establishment of the Energy Efficiency Working Group which provides information, tools, and know-how to support the efforts of the countries of the Americas in achieving



## Department of Social Development and Employment



greater energy efficiency and conservation. ECPA is also supporting the expansion of green buildings, low-income energy efficiency housing for the poor and sustainable public transport, it is providing technical assistance for geothermal development, it is working jointly with the United States Peace Corps on promoting awareness with regard to renewable energy and climate change, and it is delivering technical assistance to governments engaged in developing innovative clean production policies for their industries.

The Department of Sustainable Development supports the United States and Brazil in their efforts to advance sustainable bioenergy development programs and projects and diversify energy generation in the Americas. Since 2007, bioenergy studies have been conducted in the project countries including Haiti, Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, and El Salvador. In the case of El Salvador, technical assistance was provided for ethanol blending and logistics, and a study for distillery expansion at existing sugar mills was conducted to determine the feasibility of modifying and expanding two sugar factories to produce fuel grade ethanol. Technical assistance has also been provided to the Dominican Republic to introduce new legislation in support of ethanol production.

In the Caribbean region, since 2008 the Department of Sustainable Development is implementing the Caribbean Sustainable Energy Program (CSEP), whose objective is to increase the sustainability of the energy sector through improved governance and management. The program is helping seven countries of the Caribbean to overcome market barriers to renewable energy and energy efficiency by establishing sustainable energy goals through the adoption of national sustainable energy plans, and supporting the implementation of activities geared at addressing specific market barriers. Thus far, the work of the Department of Sustainable Development has facilitated the preparation of new National Energy

Policies and Sustainable Energy Action Plans in Saint Lucia, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, and the Bahamas. These reforms are drawing interest from investors in the quest for new markets where sustainable energy endeavors are encouraged. For example, new geothermal development opportunities are burgeoning in Dominica and Saint Kitts and Nevis where exploration drilling has taken place. In Saint Kitts and Nevis a new wind farm was erected and another is being built. In Grenada, the Department supported the creation of a revolving fund to finance the purchase of solar water heaters for low income households.



The Department of Sustainable Development operates the Regional Secretariat for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP). This partnership seeks to advance low carbon economic growth through projects aimed at developing business and finance models, as well as policies and regulations, for renewable energy

and energy efficiency. In Brazil, the REEEP provided the cash to fund the installation of 200 efficient cook stoves in the northeast state of Pará. The effort caught the eye of the local government, which in 2008 scaled-up the project to build another 4,000 stoves with Pará state's funding. An investment for an additional 18,000 cook stoves was made in 2009.

These are some tangible examples of collaboration supported by the Department of Sustainable Development. These efforts demand the commitment of peoples and governments alike, derive considerable social and environmental benefits, create livelihoods, develop new markets, and build towards prosperity in the Americas.

## Sustainable Tourism Development in the Americas

Tourism has played an important role across the Americas bearing on the uniqueness of the historical and contemporary roots, combined with the inimitable natural and cultural asset base of the region. This industry has become one of the most promising engines for sustainable development in the Americas. International tourist arrivals in the Americas reached an all-time high in 2010, growing by 8% to 151 million. The Americas was one of the fastest growing regions in the world, making up for the losses incurred in 2009. These statistics underscore the Organization of American States' recognition of the considerable potential of tourism and how the sector can contribute to economic output job creation and the reduction of poverty.

The Sustainable Tourism Program at the OAS Executive Secretariat for Integral Development seeks to promote the productivity and competitiveness of the tourism industry in OAS Member States and to enhance business opportunities for MSMEs linked to this industry in particular, by strengthening human and institutional capacity and supporting the development of public policies for the tourism sector through regional cooperation and dialogue among authorities, exchange of best practices and other activities.

### POLICY DIALOGUE

The OAS recently participated in the XIX Inter-American Travel Congress in El Salvador. Under the theme, "Tourism: A Challenge for Addressing Poverty," Ministers and High Authorities in Tourism met in San Salvador and engaged in dialogue, discussions and the sharing of experiences focused on innovative ideas and mechanisms for reducing poverty, an area of major challenge to the hemisphere. The Congress culminated with the approval of the Declaration of San Salvador to Sustainable Tourism Development in the Americas which among other things, "Recognize the significant contribution of the tourism sector to national poverty and social inequality-reduction efforts and to the enhancement of the quality of life of host communities, to sustainable economic development of our countries, particularly in job creation, relaxation, recreation, business opportunities, and the development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, particularly for vulnerable



populations, such as women, children, racial and ethnic minorities, and indigenous peoples as well as its multiplier effect and excellent potential for long-term growth together with its important cultural and social benefits." Another significant actionable milestone coming out of this Congress was the creation of the Hemispheric Tourism Fund. This hemispheric fund was designed to support communities in the countries of the hemisphere that have tourism potential but cannot fully achieve development because of extreme poverty.

### A STEP FORWARD

The OAS continues its support for Small Tourism Enterprises building on its successful Small Tourism Enterprise Program (STEP) in the Caribbean with similar initiatives in Central and South America. These initiatives all provide assistance to small tourism enterprises to enhance their competitiveness and profitability. Project actions have focused on concrete participative and personalized support through technical training programs (onsite and online) and establishing mechanisms to develop, validate, and adopt standards and certification, and the use of information and technology tools to support marketing efforts, particularly, among small hotels.

These projects have allowed the Small Tourism Enterprises to significantly improve overall management and in the case of hotels increase hotel occupancy.

### SUPPORTING ARTISANS

The OAS maintains support for artisans in its project named Supporting Our Small Caribbean Enterprises (SOURCE) which aims to provide Caribbean artisans better access to Caribbean tourism markets by strengthening their business capabilities; improving the marketability of their products; streamlining distribution systems; and creating pilot trade relationships between a foundational group of producers and Caribbean resorts, gift shops, and travel businesses. In collaborating with Resortful Arts, twenty artisans businesses were able to increase sales and create trade partnerships with Caribbean buyers. With a total of seven buyers under way and ten potential resort brands (encompassing 30 hotels and ships) considering purchasing for next season, these artisan are beginning to strengthen their business capabilities ultimately satisfying the needs for buyers and consumers.

Through the successes of this pilot project, the OAS is looking to replicate in the greater CARICOM region, as well in Central and South America.





### Our New Vision: Arts and Culture for Social Change

## Art Museum of the Americas AMA

AMA is reinventing itself. The Art Museum of the Americas of the OAS is implementing a new strategy to better respond to the OAS member state's development needs and the General Secretariat agenda, while simultaneously raising its standards of museum excellence. AMA is now operating on the principle that the arts are transformative for individuals and communities, and can be utilized to promote the core values of the OAS. The Museum strives to provide a new forum for cultural expression, communication and learning, introducing themes such as, development, human rights, justice and freedom of expression to promote local and hemispheric exchange through the arts. AMA also seeks to incorporate the use of its galleries, terraces and gardens as a meeting place for live, cross-disciplinary

and partnership programs that promote creativity, dialogue, and new ideas. In doing so, AMA continues to identify and establish strategic alliances with the OAS Secretariat for Integral Development foundations. It has established partnerships with other museums, NGO's, and institutions in the United States and other member states to optimize resources that will ensure the completion of its mission. The museum strives to differentiate itself from other modern art museums by promoting social change via creative expression and social outreach programs; it strives to enrich the local and international communities by interconnecting artists, museums, social issues, and audiences across the Americas.



### Culture, Arts, and Social Inclusion

AMA's new social outreach strategies have resulted, for example, in the establishment of three orchestra training centers in the Caribbean (Haiti, Jamaica, and Saint Lucia). The "Orchestra Program for Youth at Risk in the Caribbean," established in 2009, contributes to the reduction of risk factors that could result in violent behavior. It redirects youth's spare time into a systematic orchestral and choral training program to ultimately instill civic values, increasing school retention levels, and providing skills that are useful for the job market and higher education.



### New Art with an Edge

AMA's new social outreach approach goes hand in hand with its cutting edge exhibit programming that showcases young and upcoming artists that craftily balance social and political issues with high quality artistic production, generating an upward swing in media coverage. Exhibitions and AMA programming were regularly featured in the national and international news media outlets, as well as on numerous local art blogs.

### Our History and Most Valuable Assets

With its unique regional focus, AMA collects, studies, and exhibits works by outstanding artists. The museum's permanent collection of contemporary Latin American and Caribbean art is one of the most important of its kind in the United States. In many cases, an OAS exhibition represented the artist's first individual exhibit outside of his/her country of origin as it continues to happen today. The collection has grown to close to 2,000 objects including paintings, sculpture, installations, prints, drawings and photographs. It reflects the rich diversity of artistic expression found in the region and provides an overview of stylistic and iconographic trends. The collection is complemented by AMA's archives, which consist of a collection of papers and records related to the art and artists of the Americas with particular focus on Latin America and the Caribbean. The archives serve as a central clearing-house for information on a broad geographical region. The archives provide a rich research resource for students and scholars.





# A Force for Positive Change

“The Summits process is a clear opportunity to devise or update a hemispheric agenda at the highest level, one that will address our societies’ most urgent problems and main challenges.”

**José Miguel Insulza, OAS Secretary General**  
**San Salvador, El Salvador**  
**June 7, 2011**

Since the leaders of the Western Hemisphere gathered in 1994 for the first time as a community of democracies, the Summit of the Americas has played an increasingly pivotal role in setting the region’s agenda. Through this process, the heads of state and government of the OAS member countries have shaped regional policy on a host of key issues, from democratic governance and human rights to security and the battle against corruption and illegal drugs.

With all the differences within the region—cultural and ethnic dissimilarities, asymmetries in size and wealth, political divergences—the Summit of the Americas brings the countries together around shared goals and common aspirations. As OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza has stated, the process provides “a clear opportunity to devise or update a hemispheric agenda at the highest level, one that will address our societies’ most urgent problems and main challenges.”

At least every three years, the presidents and prime ministers meet to update their shared objectives and renew their commitment to a strong inter-American partnership. They have the opportunity to work closely together and focus on the pressing political, development, and security issues in the region.

As significant and newsworthy as these events are, it is worth remembering that the Summit of the Americas is more than a series of meetings; it is an ongoing, dynamic process. For more than seventeen years, this process has coalesced the efforts of a range of inter-American and international agencies to support and promote the policies and mandates that have been determined at the highest level. The OAS, as the region’s leading multilateral political body, has provided the institutional framework needed to implement these mandates, ensuring continuity and positive change. It has also ensured that civil society has a voice in setting priorities, making decisions, and implementing policies.

With a focus on “Connecting the Americas: Partners for Prosperity,” the Sixth Summit of the Americas moves the process another step forward. The agenda for the meeting in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, is designed to expand cooperation to improve physical integration in the region and to tackle such persistent problems as poverty and inequality, citizen security, the effects of natural disasters, and gaps in access to technology.

These are long-term challenges that require long-term commitments. Long after the leaders have left Cartagena, Colombia, their initiatives will continue to touch the lives of the people of the hemisphere.







## Forging Consensus

As the only forum that regularly brings together the elected heads of state and government of the 34 active OAS member states, the Summit of the Americas provides a unique opportunity to forge consensus at the highest level. The First Summit of the Americas—convened by US President Bill Clinton in Miami, Florida—captured the spirit of a new era in which democracy was now the rule in the hemisphere.

“For the first time in history,” the Declaration of Principles proclaimed, “the Americas are a community of democratic societies. Although faced with differing development challenges, the Americas are united in pursuing prosperity through open markets, hemispheric integration, and sustainable development. We are determined to consolidate and advance closer bonds of cooperation and to transform our aspirations into concrete realities.”

That core commitment to democracy gave rise, several years later, to one of the signal achievements of the Summit of the Americas process: the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Based on a mandate from the Third Summit of the Americas, held in Québec City, the Democratic Charter

was intended to enhance the region’s ability to respond to democratic threats.

Article 1 lays out the fundamental principle in simple, straightforward terms: “The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it,” it says. “Democracy is essential for the social, political, and economic development of the peoples of the Americas.”

The document’s definition of democracy transcends elections and encompasses the democratic exercise of power, establishing a series of steps to take when democracy is threatened. It also draws clear links between democracy and human rights and between democracy and economic and social development.

In September 2011, in a speech to mark the ten-year anniversary of the Democratic Charter, Secretary General Insulza said the instrument had been used with success at least seven times over the years to prevent potentially destabilizing situations from becoming exacerbated. He also called for a “more profound view” of

the Democratic Charter, one that recognizes its potential not just to respond to a crisis but “to enhance the quality and effectiveness of democracy and consolidate democratic citizenship in its threefold political, civil, and social dimension.”

In addition to strengthening democracy, the Summit of the Americas process has raised the visibility of inter-American concerns and advanced shared priorities. Trade has been one area of focus. While the countries ultimately did not come to an agreement to establish the Free Trade Area of the Americas—an initial goal of the process—the momentum created by the emphasis on trade at the Miami Summit contributed to an expansion in the number of bilateral and regional free trade agreements in the Americas, Secretary General Insulza has said.

In areas as diverse as promoting human rights, fighting poverty, and cooperating against terrorism and drugs, the region’s leaders have taken steps to address complex problems. For example, the Second Summit of the Americas gave its imprimatur to the appointment of a Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression—a post that has made the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights a leading champion of press freedom in the hemisphere.

Here are three other initiatives that owe their creation to the Summit process:

### Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM)

The Second Summit of the Americas, held in Santiago, Chile, laid the groundwork for a new level of cooperation in the battle against illegal drugs. The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism, which operates under the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), uses a series of objective indicators to systematically assess the progress of each member state and of the region as a whole in combating drug production, trafficking, and abuse.

The aim is to strengthen mutual confidence, dialogue, and hemispheric cooperation to deal with a complex and at times thorny issue. The MEM identifies each country’s strengths, weaknesses, progress, and setbacks and provides recommendations for effective policies and programs. It also assists countries in generating internal support to fight the drug problem and offers them the opportunity for technical or financial assistance and training to implement recommendations.

### Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE)

The hemisphere’s determination to address the problem of terrorism dates back to the First Summit of the Americas. The countries held a series of meetings on the subject and established CICTE in 1999. The attacks of September 11, 2001, brought new urgency and attention to the region’s counterterrorism efforts. Today the OAS CICTE Secretariat has a full range of programs offering technical assistance and training to prevent, combat, and eliminate terrorism.

CICTE programs are divided into six broad program areas: border controls, financial controls, critical infrastructure protection, legislative assistance and consultations, crisis management exercises, and policy development and coordination. The latter program promotes international cooperation and coordination with other international, regional, and subregional bodies, as well as the private sector.





## Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN)

Social protection encompasses a broad range of public policies and private initiatives designed to invest in human capital by providing income and essential services to people living in extreme poverty. The Inter-American Social Protection Network, which came out of the Fifth Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, seeks to identify and implement effective strategies to break the cycle of poverty that afflicts millions of people in the region.

The adoption of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which called for cutting extreme poverty in half by 2015, accelerated the task of promoting social development. The countries of the Americas have been pioneers in developing new approaches, such as conditional cash transfer programs that provide immediate financial incentives for families to keep children healthy and in school. The IASPN brings together a range of public and private players—such as social development ministries, international agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and academia—to share information, exchange ideas, and transfer or adapt policies, programs, and practices that have proved to be successful.



As important as the Summits of the Americas have been in terms of content, they have also strengthened and enriched the process of multilateral decision-making and cooperation.

The Summits bring together not only the region's heads of state and government, but also the heads of the most important inter-American and global institutions that are working to advance political, social, and economic development in the hemisphere. The Joint Summit Working Group, chaired by the OAS Summits of the Americas Secretariat, is the forum through which the region's institutions coordinate their Summit-related efforts. It is made up of twelve institutions:

- OAS
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

- Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)
- Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)
- Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI)
- Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF)
- Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- World Bank (WB)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

These institutions are instrumental both in preparing for the Summits and in implementing the commitments made by the presidents and prime ministers. Over the years, they have increased their collaboration, technical assistance, and follow-through efforts, giving the Summit process continuity and a greater reach.

Also under the direction of the Summits of the Americas Secretariat, the process has expanded opportunities for civil society and the private sector to engage in dialogue at every step so that NGOs can have a voice in determining priorities and shaping policies. The seed of this engagement was present in Miami but really took root at the 2001 Summit.

"We welcome and value the contributions of civil society, including business and labor organizations, to our Plan of Action," the leaders stated in the Declaration of Quebec City. "We affirm that openness and transparency are vital to building public awareness and legitimacy for our undertakings. We call upon all citizens of the Americas to contribute to the Summit process."

The participation of civil society has become an established component of the Summit of the Americas process, and in recent years the Internet has made it possible for more people to directly contribute their ideas and views. In the lead-up to Cartagena, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat hosted a series of activities, including policy roundtables and online consultations, so participants could contribute ideas related to the main themes on the agenda for the region's leaders. The discussions were timed to coincide with the political negotiation schedule, giving participants the chance to present recommendations that could be taken into



account in the texts being prepared for the Sixth Summit.

A series of online consultations had several aims: to broaden awareness of the Summit process in general and the themes and objectives of the Sixth Summit in particular; to make the process more accessible to people around the hemisphere; to provide an opportunity for people to engage with their governments and with each other on critical issues; and to convey the input from these discussions to the delegations in a timely manner.

More than 8,900 individuals participated either in person or online with questions or comments. Many of the participants spoke on behalf of NGOs, universities, or other groups, so the number of people whose views were reflected is actually much higher.

As with previous Summits of the Americas, in the days before the heads of state and government arrive in Cartagena, the city is hosting a series of forums by groups that have a particular stake in the process—including indigenous peoples, youth, labor, and civil society organizations. On the eve of the Summit, more than 300 CEOs from the region are also

scheduled to be in Cartagena to contribute their views on how to address the region's pressing problems.

Over the years, the Summit of the Americas process has recognized the role of the private sector in realizing the region's aspirations. For example, the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain states: "We are committed to facilitating investment and public-private partnerships in infrastructure and other relevant sectors in order to promote business development, economic growth and social development with equity."

The Summit of the Americas process, in short, provides not only a space for engaging in dialogue at the highest level, but a broad framework for ensuring that the decisions made are carried out. Working in conjunction with its sister inter-American institutions, the OAS facilitates all aspects of the process, including negotiations, planning, implementation, outreach, and follow-up. It seeks to engage citizens at every step, recognizing that their participation is essential to ensure that political dialogue is translated into action on critical issues related to development, citizen security, human rights, and democratic governance. The result is a process that is inclusive and effective—a force for positive change to the benefit of the peoples of the Americas.







## Summits of the Americas at a Glance



- **First Summit of the Americas**

December 1994 – Miami  
United States



- **Summit on Sustainable Development**

December 1996 – Santa Cruz de la Sierra  
Bolivia



- **Second Summit of the Americas**

April 1998 – Santiago  
Chile



- **Third Summit of the Americas**

April 2001 – Quebec City  
Canada



- **Special Summit of the Americas**

January 2004 – Monterrey  
Mexico



- **Fourth Summit of the Americas**

November 2005 – Mar del Plata  
Argentina



- **Fifth Summit of the Americas**

April 2009 – Port of Spain  
Trinidad and Tobago



# Defending the Rights of Groups and Individuals

“The history of our region has paralleled the advancement of human rights. Many of our countries have experienced traumatic periods in their histories during which human rights were violated or suppressed. In those very same countries, the people waged their own battles to reinstate the value and dignity of life as their core concern.

This is why the inter-American system of human rights is such an enormous accomplishment.

Its promotion and defense is, therefore, part of our identity.”

**José Miguel Insulza, OAS Secretary General**

Washington, DC

May 26, 2005

## The Mission to Promote and Protect Human Rights in the Americas

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) is a principal and autonomous organ of the Organization of American States (OAS). It is composed of seven independent members who serve in a personal capacity. Created by the OAS in 1959, the Commission has its headquarters in Washington DC. Together with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (“the Court” or the I/A Court H.R.), installed in 1979, the Commission is one of the institutions within the inter-American system for the protection of human rights.

The inter-American human rights system was created a half century ago to defend the rights of individuals and groups. Over the course of time as it has conducted its work, the IACHR has served that purpose, as well as addressed broader structural problems that affect millions of people. Through the visits it makes to countries and the country reports it prepares, for example, the Commission focuses on structural problems that have an impact on broad sectors of the population. In its decisions on cases, the Commission examines the victim’s plight and

recommends the measures necessary to do justice and make reparations. It also examines the structural problems surrounding the violations and makes recommendations on how that underlying situation can be corrected through legislative reform, implementation of public policy, and other avenues. In this way, the Inter-American Commission has played a preventive role that is essential to avoid the occurrence of human rights violations.

In recent years, with the strengthening of democratic government, important strides have been made. However, the *coup d’état* in Honduras in June 2009 made it clear that the consolidation of democratic governments in the hemisphere is still unfinished. The IACHR has been and continues to be a key actor in strengthening the democratic system. The contribution of the Commission in this sense can be analyzed, for example, in the quota laws that have increased the participation of women in politics, in progress in relation to the subordination of the military to civilian rule, and in concrete measures to guarantee the exercise of the right to freedom of expression, including the nullification of the *desacato* laws and progress in access to information possessed by the State.





## Truth, Justice, and Reparation

On September 18 of this year, it will have been twenty years since the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights adopted Resolution 24/87 in which it held that Military Patrol No. 22 of the Manizales Ayacucho Battalion had detained my eldest son, Luis Fernando Lalinde.

The Eighth Army Brigade handed me a cardboard box containing 68 bones. They had been exhumed, some from the root of a tree, while others were found scattered around, in the upper reaches of the mountain. Every day we are more and more certain that had the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights not intervened when it did, we would never have known the truth and his remains would still be scattered up there on the mountain or in a common grave or in a riverbed, as is happening in Colombia at the present time.

And as we visited his grave on this anniversary, I thought about all this and what these twenty years since the Commission's adoption of resolution 24/87 have meant to the family; the wave of solidarity that engulfed us until the truth of what happened to my son finally came to light. As I gazed at the name plate at his grave I asked myself this: How do we express our gratitude? How can I convey my feelings and what the discovery of his remains has meant; what it means to us to have given him back his identity and buried his bones in a manner befitting the dignity of a human being, amid this humanitarian crisis that this country is experiencing and that has converted the countryside into an enormous grave that has swallowed up thousands of unidentified bodies?

Extracts of a letter from Fabiola Lalinde to the IACHR. Reproduced with her authorization.

The progress achieved points to the fact that the Inter-American Commission serves to enable societies and the States to move on reforms that make it possible to correct human rights violations, both individual and collective, and to solve structural problems in the defense of human rights, thereby preventing further violations. In democratic systems, voices demanding to be heard are becoming louder and louder; growing numbers of citizens are demanding the respect and dignity they deserve and their rightful place in society. The Commission hears the voices of those who are neither heard nor heeded in their countries. Often, the Commission's proceedings on a case, the precautionary measures it grants, or the public hearings it holds, afford those who have been denied justice the first opportunity to obtain it. The procedures are a means to put an end to impunity for heinous crimes and serve as a catalyst for enactment of laws against domestic violence. They have also been instrumental in reversing a conviction and prison sentence of a journalist who investigated

corruption committed by a public official, in getting an indigenous people title to their ancestral lands, and in saving the lives of thousands of persons living with HIV, who finally can receive the medical treatment and antiretroviral drugs they need. These accomplishments are proof that the work of the Commission has a positive impact on the lives of those who turn to it for justice,

on the situation of groups that have historically been the victims of discrimination, and on structural problems. All this serves to improve the legal architecture and stimulate the introduction of public policies that will help build a democratic rule of law in which all people can live with dignity.







## Children Recruited into Compulsory Military Service

In Asunción, on June 6, 2006, speaking for the State, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay asked forgiveness from the mother of Víctor Hugo Maciel. Víctor, at age 15, was recruited into Compulsory Military Service in the Paraguayan Army in early 1995. Víctor died on October 2, 1995, as a consequence of the extreme exercises that his unit was given as corporal punishment for not having stamped the floor with their boots with sufficient force at formation time.

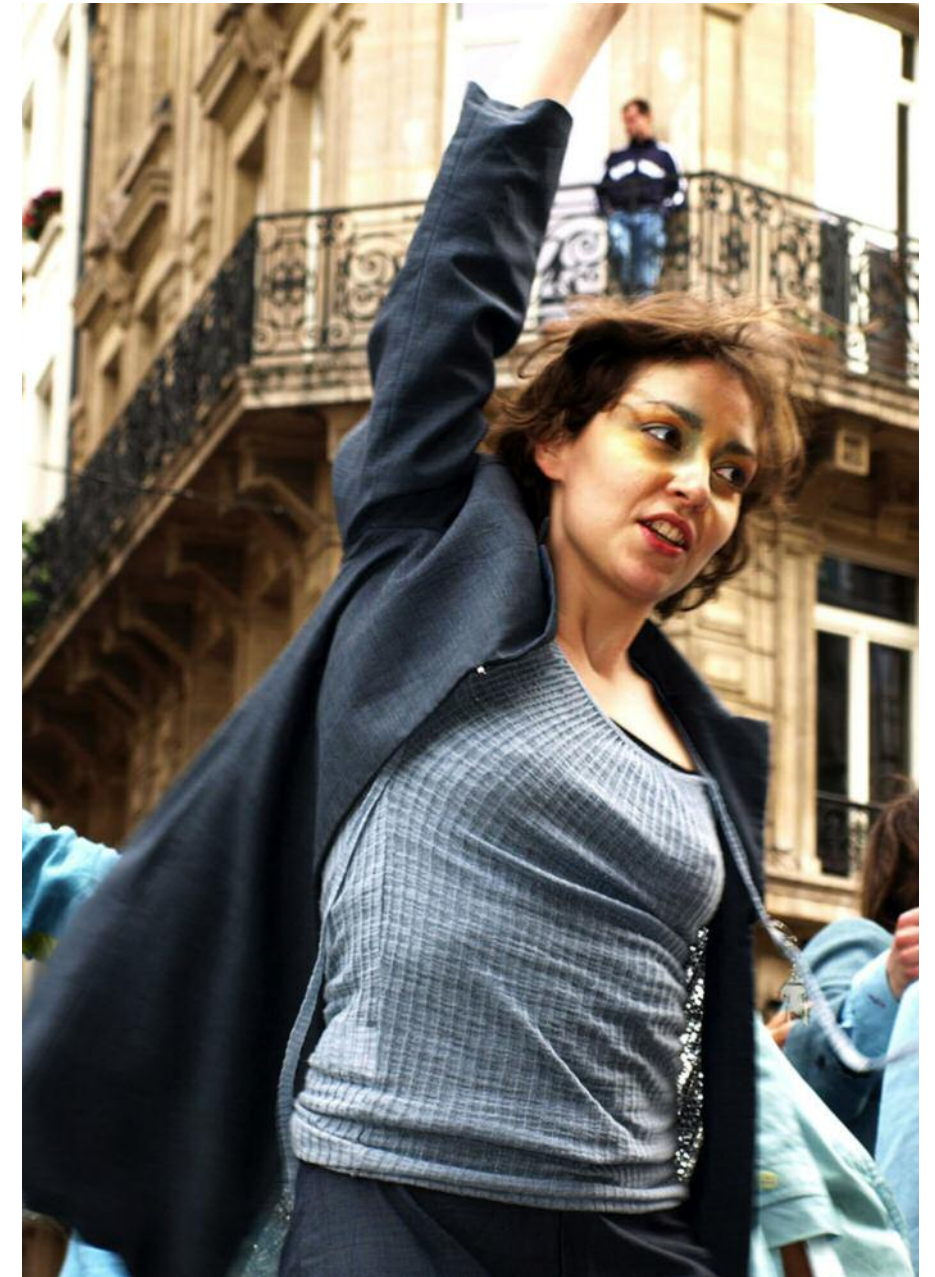
"When I received my son's body, I couldn't stop crying," said his mother, Ana Francisca Alcaráz, in a documentary film made by the petitioner organizations in this case. The case was closed in the military courts; the case in the civilian courts had gone nowhere. "I have had many hard times in life, but my greatest sadness was not knowing how my son died," his mother said. The case came to the IACHR on March 14, 1996.

In keeping with the Commission's recommendations, a ceremony where the State acknowledged responsibility and apologized was held; the first of its type in Paraguay. Facing the victim's next of kin were officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Justice and Labor, the Attorney General, the Commander of the Armed Forces, and other high-ranking members of the military. Addressing Víctor Hugo Maciel's mother, the Foreign Minister said the following:

"From the depths of my soul, and speaking as a mother and as a representative of the Government, I ask forgiveness from you, Doña Francisca, and from your family." Today, the street on which Ana Francisca Alcaráz lives bears her son's name.

The ceremonies at which States acknowledge responsibility and ask forgiveness from the victims' family members help ease the pain and give them the strength to carry on with their lives. The case of Víctor Hugo Maciel is one of many examples that reveal the two dimensions of the Commission's mission: at the individual level, justice was served by the State's acknowledgement of responsibility and its apology, naming the street where he lived in the victim's honor and paying economic reparations to the family. At the structural level, the case also played a key role in bringing about a change of preventive importance. In Paraguay, thousands of children were recruited to serve in the Army. Between 1989 and the date of the law's amendment, 113 young Paraguayans perished in the compulsory military service; 60 of these were children. The case brought to the Commission, after the Paraguayan State fulfilled the commitments undertaken in the friendly settlement, put an end to this situation. As a result, no more Paraguayan children will be recruited into the military.

## Women Victims of Domestic Violence



In Brazil, the "Maria da Penha Act" establishes penalties for acts of domestic and intra-family violence against women, promotes programs to rehabilitate offenders, and establishes special police forces and courts. The law is named after Maria da Penha Maia Fernandes, who was the victim of a case of domestic violence that came to the Commission. Maria da Penha is a Brazilian pharmacist who was battered by her husband for years. She was ultimately paralyzed after being shot by her husband while she was sleeping. The attacks on Mrs. Fernandes and the problems she encountered in her quest for justice exposed Brazil's tolerance

for the violence that thousands of women endure day after day.

In its report on the case, the IACHR held the Brazilian State responsible for the violation of Maria da Penha Maia Fernandes' human rights, as her case fit into a broader pattern of the Brazilian courts' tolerance for violence perpetrated against women. The Commission recommended that the State take measures to ensure the effective punishment, prevention, and eradication of violence against women. The result was the



passage of an anti-domestic violence law that introduced special courts, training for special police forces to take the lead in cases of domestic violence, and other measures. In August 2008, María da Penha received a token compensation in a public ceremony led by the President of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. "This woman emerged from the ashes to become a symbol of the struggle against domestic violence in our country," said the President. One year after the Commission issued its report on the merits, the Brazilian courts convicted and jailed her former husband.

"It was very important for me to file the complaint, because it brought to international attention the fact that countless women are victims of *machismo*; it also exposed the State's lack of commitment to put an end to impunity. I felt vindicated for all the times that, even in the face of humiliation, I expressed my indignation and demanded justice so that my case would not be forgotten," Maria da Penha said. "Before, there was no way to file a complaint and have one's case heard so as to save one's life. Now women no longer have to feel ashamed (about filing a complaint). (...)We have made progress; positive measures have been taken within the federal government, such as the creation of the Special Secretariat on Policies for Women. Even so, much remains to be done."



## Right of Indigenous Peoples to their Ancestral Lands

On December 14, 2008, Nicaragua gave the Awas Tingni Community title to 73,000 hectares of its territory on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. It was the culmination of a long process that had started decades earlier. The Inter-American system's decision on this case made history. This was the first case concerning indigenous collective ownership of property, a case that the Commission submitted to the Court and that became a milestone when the Court's judgment recognized the indigenous community's rights to ownership of the land. The Court's judgment stated, *inter alia*, the following: "Indigenous groups, by the fact of their very existence, have the right to live freely in their own territory; the close ties of indigenous people

with the land must be recognized and understood as the fundamental basis of their cultures, their spiritual life, their integrity, and their economic survival. For indigenous communities, relations to the land are not merely a matter of possession and production but a material and spiritual element which they must fully enjoy, even to preserve their cultural legacy and transmit it to future generations." This judgment became a legal precedent of enormous importance in international human rights law.

Ancestral lands were turned over to indigenous communities as the result of another case presented to and processed by the IACHR. The Paraguayan State acquired 21,800 hectares of land in the Pozo Colorado district of El Chaco, turned it over to the Lamenxay and Riachito (Kayleyphapopyet) indigenous communities of the Enxet-Sanapaná people, and put the title in their name in July, 1998, in keeping with the terms of the friendly settlement agreement. The President of the Republic handed over the property titles to the

representatives of the communities in the presence of the Commission.

"This was the first case in which an international tribunal with legally binding authority found a government in violation of the collective land rights of an indigenous group. The judgment set an important precedent for the rights of indigenous peoples in international law, signaling to governments that a new era of respect for indigenous rights was in the making," said James Anaya, UN Rapporteur on the Situation of the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples.







## An End to Impunity

The IACHR played a paramount role in getting member states to recognize that laws granting amnesty for serious violations of human rights are themselves violations of international law. From its first cases, the Commission has underscored access to justice as an essential component of the rule of law. The Commission's decisions in cases against Argentina, Uruguay, El Salvador, Chile, and Peru opened doors that led to the prosecution and trial of those responsible for the overthrow of legitimate governments and the murder and disappearance of thousands of persons.

In Argentina, on June 14, 2005, the Supreme Court of Argentina decided that the due obedience and full stop laws were inapplicable based in large part on the rulings of the inter-American system. The Argentine Supreme Court ruling began with a reference to a report by the Commission on a case of Argentina, where it had been

established that the amnesty laws were in violation of the American Convention. Accordingly, the Supreme Court established that the Argentine State should have adopted "the measures necessary to clarify the facts and identify those responsible." Based on this judgment of the Argentine Supreme Court, trials began in which the defendants were persons accused of serious human rights violations under the dictatorship.

Regarding Peru, at the request of the Inter-American Commission, the Inter-American Court held that the Peruvian amnesty laws were incompatible with the American Convention in the cases of *La Cantuta* and *Barrios Altos*. *La Cantuta* refers to a case in which a professor and nine university students in *La Cantuta*, Lima, were abducted, tortured, and executed by several members of the Peruvian Army. The Inter-American Court held that the massacre had been carried out with the President's knowledge. *Barrios Altos* refers to a case in which fifteen persons were executed by a

squadron called the Colina Group, composed of military intelligence members associated with the Peruvian Army. The Government of Alberto Fujimori was in no way disposed to comply with the Commission's recommendations or the rulings of the Court. However, with the collapse of the Fujimori regime, a constructive dialogue was immediately undertaken to achieve compliance with those recommendations. In 2005, the Inter-American Court concluded that the Peruvian State had complied with the obligation to declare the amnesty laws null and void. In furtherance of the Court's judgments, the Peruvian State continued to develop ways to administer justice: it indicted former president Alberto Fujimori, who had fled the country in 2002, and sought his extradition. The extradition request that were sent to Japan had the Inter-American Court sentences on the *La Cantuta* and *Barrios Altos* cases as annexes. The Peruvian justice system sentenced Fujimori to 25 years in prison, having established that he bore criminal responsibility for the disappearance and execution of 27 persons in the *La Cantuta* and *Barrios Altos* cases. It also convicted and sentenced the former head of the Peruvian Intelligence Service (SIN), Julio Salazar Monroe, to 35 years in prison. Four other former members of the Colina Group were sentenced to 15 years in prison for the crimes of forced disappearance and aggravated homicide in the *La Cantuta* case.



## Women's Political Participation

One of the basic means of consolidating democracy is the participation of women in elective office. A relevant Commission case in this regard was that of María Merciadri de Morini. Under the terms of a friendly settlement, Argentina amended its National Electoral Code to promote women's participation in politics and to get their names included on the political parties' slates of candidates for elective office. The reform, adopted on December 28, 2000, stipulates that the electoral quota applies to all elective offices for deputies, senators, and members of Constitutional Assembly; that 30% of the candidates that must go to women is a minimum; and that the quota is only deemed to have been met when it is





applied to the number of offices that each party organization is filling in a given election. The reform also spells out the sanctions that will be applied in the case of lists that do not comply with the law. This reform had an enormous impact on women's political participation and on the number of women whose names appeared on the lists of candidates for elective office in Argentina. However, it also had a very positive regional effect. Studies show that quota laws have been the most effective method for increasing women's presence in elective office. This case was instrumental in improving the regulation of laws of this type to ensure that they are properly implemented. Other countries of the region have copied this model and in recent years have adopted or amended their quota laws to enable more women to participate in politics and the political life of their country.



## Military Justice

Another critical issue in consolidating democracy is subordinating the military to civilian power. For the democratic rule of law, military criminal jurisdiction must be narrow and exceptional in nature and solely for the purpose of protecting special legal interests related to the inherent functions of the military. The inter-American human rights system has stressed this point, stating that military criminal courts are not the proper venue for investigating, prosecuting, and punishing the authors of human rights violations; instead, prosecution of human rights violations is the exclusive purview of the civilian court system. The Commission and the Court have stated emphatically that when the military justice system assumes jurisdiction in a matter that the regular courts should hear, the right to an impartial judge and to due process is violated. In recent years, some countries have amended their laws to make them consistent with this principle. In other countries, discussion of this matter is underway.

Argentina repealed its Code of Military Justice in November 2007 and adopted a new system under which the crimes committed by military personnel will be prosecuted by the civilian court system. The new law eliminates military jurisdiction and abolishes the death penalty. Under the new disciplinary regime, discriminatory sanctions related to homosexuality are eliminated and sexual harassment within the ranks of the Armed Forces is punishable as either a serious or very serious offense. These changes, which enhance democracy in Argentina, were introduced to comply with a friendly settlement agreement resolving the petition that Army Captain Rodolfo Correa Belisle filed with the Commission. Captain Belisle had been punished for speaking out against his superiors.

In Mexico, the Supreme Court of Justice decided in July 2011 that military personnel who commit the crimes of forced disappearance, torture, and rape are to be tried in civilian court rather than military court. This bill is the direct result of a number of cases against Mexico processed within the inter-American human rights system. In the case of Rosendo Radilla Pacheco, who was unlawfully





detained in 1974 and a victim of a forced disappearance perpetrated by agents of the Mexican Army, the Inter-American Commission concluded that the exercise of military jurisdiction violated the rights to judicial guarantees and to judicial protection. The Commission referred the case to the Court, which in November 2009 ordered Mexico to amend its Code of Military Justice. This issue was also brought up in connection with the emblematic cases of Valentina Rosendo Cantú and Inés Fernández Ortega, two Me'phaa indigenous women who suffered abuse at the hands of military troops posted in the State of Guerrero, in particular through the use of rape as a form

of torture. The Commission concluded that these crimes have gone unpunished largely because of the intervention of the military justice system in their investigation and prosecution. The processing of these cases in the inter-American system stirred up an intense debate in Mexico as to which crimes should be prosecuted by the civilian courts and which by the military courts. The bill sent to Congress occupies an important place in the country's political agenda due to these cases were processed in the inter-American human rights system.

## Freedom of Expression

Substantial progress has been made throughout the region in the area of freedom of expression, with the IACHR as the catalyst. The repeal of the *desacato* laws that made criticism of public officials a punishable offense and the enactment of freedom of information laws play a fundamental role in consolidating democracy. These actions allow criticism of authorities without fear of reprisals and transparency in the business of the governing. A dozen countries of the region have struck down their *desacato* laws. This process began when the journalist Horacio Verbitsky filed a petition with the IACHR in

May 1992, which was settled through a friendly settlement that resulted in the repeal of the *desacato* laws in Argentina. The Commission's report concluded that the *desacato* laws were not compatible with the American Convention on Human Rights because they lend themselves to abuse as a means to silence ideas and opinions, thus suppressing the discourse necessary for democratic institutions to function effectively. The Commission observed that citizens have the right to criticize and to examine the actions and attitudes of public officials insofar as they relate to the public function, and that *desacato* laws discourage criticism because the public fears prosecution or fines. The Commission then urged all States to repeal the *desacato* laws. The Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression worked hard to achieve that objective. As a result, the *desacato* laws were repealed not just in Argentina, but also in Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico (at the federal level), Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

The IACHR also concluded that the threat of criminal prosecution under laws on defamation, slander, and libel could also be used to silence ideas and opinions. The Commission warned of the possibility that public officials might abuse such laws to silence criticism, a threat that is as great with these laws as it is with the *desacato* laws. The case of journalist Mauricio Herrera Ulloa afforded Costa Rica the opportunity to vacate the criminal defamation case prosecuted against him. The Commission continues to advocate for the decriminalization of crimes against honor; a number of countries in the region have either already completed or have started the legislative process to decriminalize offenses against honor, thereby ensuring greater freedom of expression.





# A Constant Effort Toward Gender Equality

“A democracy that refuses to fight for gender equality is only half a democracy.”

José Miguel Insulza, OAS Secretary General  
Washington, DC  
March 8, 2012

The OAS has put gender equity on its agenda under the basic principle of building stronger and more prosperous democracies so that all citizens, without regard for sex, race, or origin, can have the same opportunities to participate in society. One of the priority tasks of the General Secretariat is that of strengthening the executive capacity of the Inter-American Committee of Women (CIM) to give it a more preponderant role in the promotion of gender equality, which is essential to democracy.

In fact, the reinforcement of CIM's capacity has allowed it to play an important role in the hemispheric debate on women's struggle for equal access to political, social, economic, and cultural life. CIM was created in 1928 with this mission and with a vision of achieving full recognition of the citizenship rights of women in the Americas.

As the first hemispheric forum for the rights of women, CIM's leadership role in promoting international jurisprudence and public policies for citizenship and equality has been evident in the adoption of the Inter-American Convention on the Nationality of Women (1933), the Inter-American Convention on the Granting of

Civil Rights to Women (1948), and Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Political Rights to Women (1948), as well as the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish, and Eradicate Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention, 1994).

These binding legal frameworks have been fundamental instruments for the recognition of women as subjects of human rights and active participants in the democratic system.

CIM is made up of 34 Principal Delegates—one from each OAS member state—who are designated by their respective governments. The delegates meet every two years during the Assembly of Delegates, which is CIM's highest authority and is responsible for approving its work plans and programs. The Assembly also elects a nine-member Executive Committee that meets once or twice a year to evaluate the implementation of the Committee's work plans.

In June 2000, the OAS General Assembly adopted the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality (PIA) which responded to the hemispheric situation and context and the priorities that were emerging from the political, economic, and social conditions in the Americas. This program, together with the 2011–2016 Strategic Plan, serves as a guiding framework for the Committee's efforts to protect the rights of women and promote gender equality in the

Americas through effective public policy and other instruments.

Along those same lines, the main goals of the Strategic Plan are to coordinate and harmonize CIM actions with those of the OAS; and to mainstream gender rights and equality into all of the primary forums and programs of the OAS and into the institutional planning of the organization.

The Strategic Plan is structured based on four programmatic areas to harmonize and coordinate CIM actions with the four thematic pillars of the OAS:

- Women's substantive political citizenship for democracy and governability
- Women's economic security and citizenship
- Women's human rights of women and gender-based violence
- Citizen security from a gender perspective





## Women's Substantive Political Citizenship for Democracy and Governability



Notwithstanding the progress made in recognizing women's civil and political rights and their right to equality at the constitutional level, women continue to be subject to conditions that limit and block their ability to exercise their political rights. They have very limited access to political decision-making positions and, considering the percentage of women among citizens and voters (more than 50% of the population of the region), they are infra-represented in political institutions.

### • Statistics: Women's Political Citizenship in the Americas

- Average number of women in the Chambers of Deputies: 15%
- In the Senate: 12%
- In the executive cabinets of the 30 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean: 20.84%
- Among mayors: 8.5%
- In seven Latin American countries, more than 50% of the members of political parties are women, yet women occupy only 20% of the leadership positions in those parties

Women have become a real political force and an alternative that responds to the kind of leadership citizens are looking for to solve their daily problems and revitalize the process of building participatory democracies in the countries of the region.

In this context, CIM, with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and in collaboration with UN Women and International IDEA, has initiated an innovative dialogue process to contribute women's perspective and experience to discussions on the topic of "a citizens' democracy" in the region. This dialogue was opened formally during the "First Hemispheric Forum on Women's Leadership for a Citizens' Democracy" (April 4-6, 2011, Washington DC).

As a result of the Forum, a Regional Working Group on Women's Full Citizenship for Democracy was established. This group is creating a regionally-referenced analytical framework on citizens' democracy from a women's perspective.



The Working Group, made up of 18 regional experts from diverse sectors and disciplines, exchanged ideas with the OAS Secretary General on obstacles that must be overcome in order to guarantee the rights of women in democratic systems today.

In order to help countries follow up on and implement the commitments they have made in the area of women's rights and gender equality, CIM launched a new

initiative in March 2012 aimed at presidential candidates and candidates for election at other levels. The initiative invites candidates to participate in an in-depth debate on their positions and platforms for the rights of women and for gender equality. The first gathering of this kind was held on March 7-8 in Santo Domingo with candidates for the presidency of the Dominican Republic.





## Women's Economic Security and Citizenship

### • Statistics:

#### The Economic Citizenship of Women in the Americas

- Women are exposed to poverty at much higher levels than men in all of the countries of the region
- In 13 out of 18 countries of the region, this difference grew wider between 2002 and 2008
- 80% of the total number of women living in poverty in the English-speaking Caribbean are in Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, and Saint Lucia
- Unemployment among women has increased from 9.3% to 10.1%, well above the 7.5% unemployment rate for men
- In 2009, women's participation in the informal sector increased by 3.1%. 57.1% of all women can only find work in this sector, versus 51% of men
- Only 15% of women and 25% of men between the ages of 15 and 65 are enrolled in social security programs

Given the wide range of economic conditions in the Americas, the global financial crisis has had different effects in different countries, but women have felt a disproportionate impact as compared to men in all of the countries of the hemisphere. In general terms, this reality is not being considered in the packets of measures being implemented to confront the crisis and stimulate economic recovery in the region. These deficiencies in economic policy have implications for sustained economic growth and competitiveness in the region.

In spite of the fact that their education and skill levels have increased, women continue to be discriminated against and excluded in every economic sphere. But inequality and discrimination against women also take a toll on economies, on growth, and on the consolidation of democracy in the region, and strategies for increasing the competitiveness and productivity of the region's economies are less effective if they do not include women.

In this context and as part of a project titled Advancing Gender Equality in the Context of Decent Work, CIM and the OAS Department of Social Development and

Employment sponsored the first high level dialogue between Ministers of Labor and National Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women in the Hemisphere, in November 2011, with the support of the Canadian Agency for International Development (CIDA).

The meeting was the first of its kind and a milestone that allowed the experiences, recommendations, and perspectives of government groups to be shared as well as worker and employer points of view, all with a goal of achieving greater equality between men and women in the working world, particularly in reference to:

- Increasing the participation and employment of women,
- Reducing gender gaps in the area of labor income and informal labor,
- Improving the quality of employment for women,
- Ensuring equitable access to the benefits of social protection,
- Advocating for ways to reconcile remunerated work and family responsibilities, and
- Increasing the participation of women in social dialogue structures and labor unions.

During the high level meeting, CIM released its study titled Advancing Gender Equality in the Context of Decent Work. At the presentation of that publication, OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza reaffirmed the urgency of advancing towards the elimination of gender inequalities and creating conditions in which all women can fully exercise their economic citizenship. "To do so, it is essential to incorporate measures and generate opportunities for women in plans of policies related to labor and employment," he said.

## Women's Human Rights and Gender-based Violence



Latin America and the Caribbean has made more progress than any other region in the formal recognition of women's rights, gradually adapting its national legislation to the universal and inter-American legal framework. In spite of these efforts, women are still not receiving adequate protection from physical violence (OECD, 2010), and they continue to be at a disadvantage with respect to most social and economic development indicators.

With the adoption of the Belém do Pará Convention, CIM has a specific mandate to promote women's right to a life free of violence. The Follow-up Mechanism to the

Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) was established in this context. It is a process of ongoing and independent monitoring backed both by the States Parties to the Convention and by the international community.

In September 2011, MESECVI held its Seventh Meeting of the Committee of Experts, where the draft Hemispheric Report on the Second Multinational Evaluation Round of the Belem do Para Convention was adopted. At the same time, an International Seminar on Human Rights, Violence against Women, and Access to Justice was organized at the





OAS, during which representatives of the justice sector discussed progress made and challenges remaining for jurisprudence on violence.

In March 2011, MESECVI held its Third Conference of States Parties, where 20 agreements were adopted to strengthen the response to violence against women in the hemisphere. They included decisions to exchange experiences on violence, a commitment to include the issue of violence against women in citizen security policies, and other agreements.

• **Statistics:**  
**Women's Right to Life Free of Violence**

- In São Paulo, 27% of women who have had a male partner at some time report having experienced physical violence, and 10% report having experienced sexual violence
- 51% of women in Lima have been physically or sexually abused by their partners, and 23% of them have been sexually abused
- Around the world, an estimated 500,000 to 1, 300,000 women and girls are trafficked each year over international borders
- In 2008, 53.4% of girls in Colombia were victims of child abuse, and the highest rates of abuse were found among girls between 10 and 14 years of age
- In 2003, 64 of the 231 femicides committed in Argentina were committed with firearms

In January 2012, CIM concluded a project titled "Human rights, HIV, and violence against women in Central America:" Integrated responses in which integrated models were created in four countries, seed money was given to social organizations, and promising practices were identified in several countries to respond to the interconnections between HIV and violence against women from a human rights focus.

The project culminated in an Inter-sectoral Meeting on Integrated Responses to Human Rights, HIV, and Violence Against Women in Central America (January 18-20, 2012, Antigua) which brought key project partners together with international experts to talk about the results of the project implementation in their countries and to identify opportunities to follow up on the project in each national context.

In December 2011, CIM began a substantive collaboration with the American Bar Association on a platform called

IMPOWR, the International Models Project on Women's Rights ([www.impowr.org](http://www.impowr.org)). The objective of IMPOWR is to be an open and dynamic source for collectively building knowledge on the legal rights of women in every country of the world.

IMPOWR follows the Wikipedia model and invites users to contribute information about advances and setbacks in legal matters related to women's rights, using the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish, and Eradicate Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention) as frameworks. As part of the collaboration, CIM will contribute information about the countries of the Americas. With the support of experts from various countries, pages have already been started for Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, United States, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay.







## Citizen Security from a Gender Perspective

The lack of citizen security is one of the main threats to stability, democratic governance, and sustainable human development in the Americas.

While citizen insecurity is a problem that affects the entire population, it is clear that women experience violence, dispossession, trafficking, and other security problems in a different way than men do—differences resulting primarily from the social construction of gender roles. As the UNDP says “It is not a simple quantitative difference, for example, in the number of homicides of women or of men, or of the authorship of the crime.”

However, as Liliana Rainero says in Tools for the Promotion of Safe Cities from the Gender perspective,

“... it is possible to observe that both public debate on the issue of insecurity, and the public policies and actions designed to address it, are based on

indicators that reduce violence to criminal typologies that tend to exclude the violence exercised specifically against women.”

The lack of consideration of women’s security needs, on one hand, and the absence of women in decision-making and action spaces related to citizen security, on the other hand, means that the security policies of most countries in the region are ignoring more than 50% of their population.

In June 2011, CIM, in collaboration with the IACHR, IIHR, and OHCHR, organized an international seminar on human rights and citizen security in the framework of the 41st General Assembly of the OAS. The seminar brought together experts on violence against women, citizen security, and human rights in order to emphasize the priority of these issues in all citizen security programs and policies.

## The Institutionalization of a Rights-Based and Gender Equality Approach

In addition to the four programmatic areas, CIM has as its own “pillar” of work that has to do with mainstreaming the gender equality and rights focus in all of the work of the OAS (its mandates, policies, plans, programs, projects, forums, and other initiatives).

International organizations have been making efforts to institutionalize gender issues since the adoption of the Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995). In the inter-American sphere, this commitment is reflected in the adoption of the PIA (2000).

Inside the Organization of American States, ten years of work on mainstreaming gender issues in the framework of the PIA has had significant impacts. A general awareness exists about the importance of

women’s rights and gender equality, and institutional knowledge and expertise are increasing. For a gender perspective to be fully incorporated into the work of the Organization, however, more efforts must be made to train personnel on the purpose of gender mainstreaming, how it is done, and who is responsible for the results.

In this context, CIM is working to create political will, commitment, and high-level responsibility; to create awareness, understanding, and an institutional position on the rights of women and gender equality; to contribute clear and mandatory political, programmatic, and project guidelines; and to maintain an ongoing and open dialogue among the staff of the Organization, supported by capacity development.



# Inter-American Social Protection Network

WORKING TO REDUCE POVERTY AND INEQUALITY  
THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEVELOPMENT

## A Clear Political Will

At the Fifth Summit of the Americas, held in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009, the region's heads of state and government expressed their concern over the high levels of poverty and inequality in the hemisphere and reaffirmed the need to make significant progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Toward that end, the OAS member states supported the creation of the Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN) as a tool to share expertise, policies, and lessons learned in this field. Paragraph 9 of the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain stated the following: "To strengthen our efforts to reduce social disparities and inequality and to halve extreme poverty by the year 2015, we commit to exchange information on policies, experiences, programs and best practices. We therefore support the establishment of an Inter-American Social Protection Network in order to facilitate this exchange."

As the region's premier political forum, the OAS is uniquely positioned to convene a diverse range of public and private

representatives and to encourage dialogue and action to advance social protection. The OAS member states have long recognized that poverty and inequality undermine democracy and human rights. The OAS Charter states that one of the Organization's essential purposes is to eradicate extreme poverty, "which constitutes an obstacle to the full democratic development of the peoples of the hemisphere." The Inter-American Democratic Charter reiterates the connection between democracy and social and economic development: "Poverty, illiteracy, and low levels of human development are factors that adversely affect the consolidation of democracy."

Following through on this critical Summit of the Americas mandate, the OAS launched the IASPN in September 2009, at an event in New York City. The goal was to build a community of practice and learning so as to strengthen countries' ministries of social development and other government agencies responsible for developing and implementing programs to reduce extreme poverty and inequality.

## IASPN as a Cooperation Mechanism

The OAS role, through the Inter-American Social Protection Network, is to facilitate cooperation and bring a regional focus to social protection that makes it possible to exchange experiences and knowledge at a multilateral level. Under the OAS model, partnership for development embraces all countries, regardless of their levels of development. It entails abandoning the traditional aid-oriented approach and developing instead cooperation programs based on a partnership which, without attempting to impose models, would support the economic and social measures taken by each member state. The IASPN seeks to build on that approach by expanding and enriching cooperation on social policies as the countries and institutions that belong to the network identify the needs and priorities of their programs.

In recent years, many countries in the Americas have developed new ways to tackle the complex problems of poverty and disparity, with results that are making

**"The Inter-American Social Protection Network will help us build the capacity we need to find new ways to break the cycle of poverty and inequality that affects too many of our citizens."**

*OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza  
New York City, 2009*





a real difference. The IASPN provides a forum to consolidate these efforts through greater cooperation. The overarching aim is to identify and implement effective strategies to break the cycle of poverty and expand opportunities for individuals and families in the region.

Through the various activities the network carries out in response to the priorities of the member states, participants can share information, exchange ideas, and transfer or adapt policies, programs, and practices that have proved to be successful.

## Network Tools

In its effort to develop a community of practice and learning around the issue of social protection, the IASPN brings a number of tools to the table. These include:

- **Virtual Platform:** This website serves as a clearinghouse for information about relevant developments, programs, and resources related to social protection in the region. It also lays the groundwork for greater interaction and networking among key players.

([www.socialprotectionet.org](http://www.socialprotectionet.org))



- **Educational and Sharing Tools:** The IASPN offers practical training at the national or regional level through a combination of in-person and virtual tools that include seminars, workshops, webinars, and social networking. It offers distance-learning and in-person courses through agreements with prestigious universities in the region.

- **Publications:** Through its reports, concept papers, manuals, newsletters, and other publications, the IASPN systematizes and disseminates critical information about political priorities and practical programs, and seeks feedback from the countries on key social protection issues.

- **Technical Support:** The OAS provides hands-on assistance in coordinating and facilitating cooperation.

## Strategic Partnerships

In following through on Summit of the Americas mandates related to the IASPN, the OAS has forged and strengthened a series of key alliances with international organizations and agencies that work in the social protection field. This makes it possible to incorporate their specialized focus on such topics as decent work, gender equality, and human development. The idea is to encourage synergy, expand collaboration, and avoid duplication of efforts.

Along these lines, the OAS has worked with several international organizations to prepare brief concept papers on specific issues related to social protection:

- **Children: A Priority of the IASPN (OAS-UNICEF)**
- **Comprehensive and Inclusive Social Protection Systems for Latin America and the Caribbean (OAS-ECLAC)**
- **Extending Social Protection (OAS-PAHO)**
- **Social Protection Floor: Commitments for Prosperity (OAS-ILO)**
- **Food Security: A Priority of the IASPN (OAS-FAO)**

In the years to come, the IASPN will continue to work diligently to fulfill the member countries' mandates by strengthening its strategic pillars. It will continue to promote horizontal cooperation through new tools at its disposal, with the ultimate goal of facilitating exchanges among the countries in the region and thus contributing to the collective effort to find alternatives to reduce poverty and inequality in the Americas.

