

José Miguel Insulza Democratic Governance



OAS: 2005-2015

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José Miguel Insulza

Democratic Governance

OAS: 2005-2015

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Prologues

More than a decade has passed since José Miguel Insulza took up office as Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the region undoubtedly has much to thank him for.

They were no easy years. As happens in our region, in that lapse of time several OAS member states, and the inter-American system itself, experienced moments of tension, at times jeopardizing internal stability and the exercise of democracy. At times, too, the normally peaceful and brotherly relations between some of our states were disrupted. On all such occasions, the OAS was called upon to intervene and its Secretary General's quiet invitations to dialogue and reconciliation invariably had an impact.

The results have proved beneficial for the region. While it still faces numerous challenges, the region has probably known no other period like this, in which, with the exception of a few very specific episodes, peace, stability, and solid institutions have prevailed. With a single exception, and despite certain flurries of populism and occasional incidents, democracy has taken root in the region and conflicts have all but disappeared.

Also worth highlighting is the fact that, over these past 10 years, significant headway has been made with boosting cooperation among the countries of the region, as well as with the restructuring and modernization of the management and internal control capabilities of the General Secretariat.

In the political arena, his strategic grasp of what was happening in the region and, let's admit it, his audacity, enabled him to perceive Cuba's isolation as an obstacle to achieving the objective of bringing together all the countries of the Americas. To that end, in 2009, he placed the issue on the regional agenda until, at the General Assembly session in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, the OAS lifted its 47-year-old suspension of Cuban government participation in the OAS.

Opposed by many, that paved the way for the 35 independent countries in our region to be sitting today at the same table, in the hope that Cuba will

soon start its transition to democracy. By taking that step, the OAS not only bade farewell to the Cold War. It also set a valuable precedent that contributed to the U.S. Government's decision to normalize its bilateral relations with the government in La Habana.

We can therefore rightly claim that today's OAS is different: more united and more democratic. That transition was guided by José Miguel Insulza, who reaped both criticism and applause for a style he has always maintained: looking for points of equilibrium and rapprochement through sincere, open, and constructive dialogue.

That praise is not feigned or insincere. I know José Miguel Insulza very well. I have worked with him and know how hard he searches for points of consensus, a quality he demonstrated even in far more challenging circumstances, when he was one of the closest members of my team, first as Minister for Foreign Affairs and then as Minister-Secretary General of the Presidency. His character and integrity are the hallmarks of his career, not only in the OAS over the past 10 years, but throughout his years of public service.

Without prejudice to the above, I feel I must take advantage of this forum to highlight the need for the governments of the Americas to commit much more robustly to strengthening the OAS: the only hemispheric organ to bring together all the states of the region.

To be fair, despite the frequent --sometimes justified -- criticisms of the OAS, it is still a far larger institution than any of the other integration bodies established in the region and it boasts, moreover, a Democratic Charter, a respected Commission on Human Rights, and more than a dozen specialized agencies addressing such issues as drugs, citizen security, and education.

Nevertheless, it is the governments themselves that, with their decisions and attitudes, often demonstrate a worrisome reluctance to support and promote the OAS, forgetting that it, like any other international organization, is what governments want it to be, because it is precisely not an autonomous entity.

I am convinced that the values on which it was founded must continue to inform its future and, hopefully, all the States of the Hemisphere will strive to achieve a revitalized and pro-active OAS, an effective tool for addressing today's problems and tasks as well as strengthening governance, democracy, human rights, and free trade, while battling drugs, crime, and corruption.

That was what José Miguel Insulza strove to achieve in these past ten years as Secretary General of the OAS, a period in which he once again demonstrated his capacity to take on serious challenges, absorb critical setbacks, and reap promising results, while at the same time contributing to the achievement of a social order of liberty, peace, and justice.

I am glad and proud to say that a Chilean has done so much for the Hemisphere.

EDUARDO FREI RUIZ TAGLE

Former President of Chile, 1994-2000

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 twentieth 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 were being governed for only 1/3 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 would have 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 had 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 organization 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. This book reveals his effort, his skillful work, and his dedication to the common cause.

LUIZ INÁCIO LULA DA SILVA

Former President of the Federative Republic of Brazil (2003-2010)



PRESENTATION

This book takes stock of 10 years of managing the OAS General Secretariat. Such a review is never complete. So many actions are undertaken in each year at the helm, that it would be impossible to list them in a limited number of pages. Moreover, the annual reports delivered to the General Assembly at each of its regular session already constitute a record of the tasks taken on.

This review is an attempt to synthesize and reflect. It must capture core moments, enable us to summarize outcomes and limitations; explain how much the OAS changed in these past ten years; and, above all, answer the question of how all that equips it to forge ahead.

Thus, we will focus on three aspects: 1) the vision that guided our work in the General Secretariat, based on an assessment of the current state of the Hemisphere; ii) the principal events of the past 10 years and how we handled them; and iii) the principal programs implemented pursuant to that vision.

That is what these pages contain: not everything, but rather what we regard as the core developments in the Organization of American States during the past ten years. I begin, in the Introduction, by explaining our vision of how the region changed both before and during this decade and of the part the OAS should play under these new circumstances. Although we have often expounded the key ideas underpinning this vision, a synthesis is needed to explain the rationale behind the Strategic Vision shaping our actions.

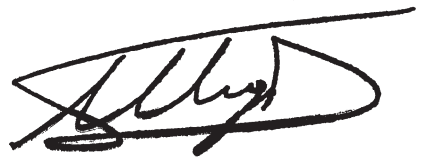
The order of the chapters follows the logic of the Strategic Vision, the principal actions and programs that, with the support of the member states and permanent observers, the General Secretariat has embarked on. Each chapter enhances our grasp of the numerous activities conducted by the OAS at headquarters and in the member states, bringing the Organization into contact

with thousands of citizens of the Americas (around issues involving human rights, electoral observations, judicial facilitation, peacekeeping missions, and so on). That is what really distinguishes this Organization from any other political body in the region.

We should stress two limitations. This book does not cover all the activities the OAS engaged in; only those that best reflect our Strategic Vision. Second, it does not include the activities of the autonomous agencies -- the Inter-American Children's Institute, the Inter-American Committee on Ports, the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights -- because they are not really agencies of the General Secretariat, even though the General Secretariat attends to their needs. To those agencies and those who direct them, we would like to convey our gratitude for the coordination and the readiness to engage in dialogue with the Secretariat and the Permanent Council that they have demonstrated in these past ten years.

Finally, even though this book takes stock of substantive issues, we have included a brief chapter on the reforms of the structure and management of the General Secretariat carried out in the past ten years to address new political and technological challenges and the need for transparency. Today's OAS is, organizationally, much more structured than it was ten years ago, enabling it to respond more promptly and effectively to the demands placed on it every day by the other participants in the inter-American dialogue.

Yet it continues to be characterized by a feature that some regard as a weakness, but which I see as part of its very nature: it depends, materially and politically, on the ongoing support of its member states. Overall, I believe we have received that support, and for that we are truly grateful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Insulza', written over a horizontal line.

José Miguel Insulza



OAS Headquarters, Washington DC

INTRODUCTION

A Strategic Vision of the OAS

I

When I took up office in the General Secretariat, in May 2005, Latin America and the Caribbean were beginning to experience a positive cycle, characterized by stronger economic growth, with major social repercussion, and with more stable democratic governments than those of the preceding decade.

Indeed, over the past several decades, the region underwent substantial changes in both the political/institutional and economic and social arenas. But the recent decade stands out in particular, because during it economic growth was much more pronounced than in the decade before it. Average aggregate growth of 5% for 2002-2008 may not have been that spectacular compared to other regions, but it was the first time it exceeded the average for the global economy and the combined growth of the past two decades of the previous century. Furthermore, some countries had far higher growth rates in several years of that same period.

All that induced major social and political changes. More robust growth generated more jobs and, thanks to appropriate social policies, improved the lives of numerous inhabitants of the region. Some 70 million people emerged from poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean, thanks to employment generation and the successful conditional cash transfer and micro-credit programs implemented by governments. The poverty rate fell from 42% to 28%, a notable improvement, even though the latter figure is still very high for a middle-income region. There was a marginal reduction in income inequality, which remains the biggest obstacle to further development in Latin America. Recent evaluations of fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals reveal that, here too, the governments of the region performed well.

A significant portion of the successes of the past ten years had to do with improved management by governments, whose ineffectiveness had often been invoked to explain previous crises. Over the past ten years, governments were more stable, with transfers of power from one to the other becoming much more normal, and, in that context, macroeconomic management improved markedly, as evidenced before and during the 2008-2009 Recession. With very few exceptions,



Secretary General Insulza and President Obama, official visit to Chile, 2011

countries pursued fiscal prudence, using accumulated reserves to implement anti-cyclical policies and thereby mitigate the impact of the crisis. The banking sector proved to be much less exposed to risk in the South than in the North and no bail-outs were needed.

Along with the economic and social improvements, in many countries political (albeit dissimilar) changes were also in evidence. Three parallel processes characterized this period.

First, the legitimate origins and stability of the region's democracies were reinforced. Even though democracy had resurfaced in the region in the decades preceding the latest ten-year period, often enough it was not accompanied by political stability. In this past decade, all OAS member states had competitive and transparent elections, with regular alternation of the parties in power, and increasingly stable governments.

Second, the countries of the region exhibited more political diversity than ever before. While they all espoused democracy, they interpreted its contents differently or at least with differing emphases. That manifested itself formally, for the first time, in the emergence of an organization comprising countries proclaiming an ideological affinity among themselves, not shared by others.

Third, the founding of UNASUR and CELAC, along with the unsuccessful conclusion of negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, reaffirmed a trend toward the establishment of subregional, rather than hemispheric, integration organizations (whereby NAFTA, SICA, and CARICOM date back decades).

In due course, it turned out that, although Latin America and the Caribbean, were spared the recession, they were not immune to the period of slow growth that followed it. Nonetheless, the political atmosphere at that time in the region -- unlike the North and other parts of the world that were experiencing political and/or economic upheaval -- created an important sensation of progress.

The “decade of Latin America” became a catchword in the world’s press. The fact that the region’s higher growth stemmed from major increases in its foreign trade reinforced the need for it to establish a wider global presence.

North America experienced a different cycle. Although the U.S. economy maintained acceptable growth rates in the first years of the decade, the global recession starting in September 2009 had a much greater impact on the North and on the developed world. Likewise, since September 2001, the priorities of the countries in the northern part of the Hemisphere were understandably related to other regions engulfed in conflict. For all their problems, Latin America and the Caribbean posed much less risk than areas in more remote continents. In short, while the southern part of the Hemisphere was undergoing huge changes, the priorities of the northern countries focused on other parts of the world.

At the same time, Latin American countries, particularly those in South America, opened up on a much larger scale to Asia, especially China, while attempting also to strengthen their traditional ties to Europe. The region’s increased exports to China, that country’s increased investment in the Hemisphere, and the signing of economic and free trade agreements between some Latin American countries and the Caribbean and other regions, highlighted trends already visible for decades: a diversification of the region’s ties that, while it leaves hemispheric ties intact, means that they are no longer practically the region’s only ties, as they were in mid-Twentieth Century.

However, this opening up to other regions should not induce us to think, for purely ideological reasons, that hemispheric relations between Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States, and Canada are less important.

This Hemisphere’s population is approaching 1 billion inhabitants, endowed with much more balanced trade relations than with other regions; with immense sources of energy and natural resources; with increasing human and cultural ties, prompted by a faster pace of migration, especially from South to North. It would be absurd to attempt greater insertion into the global economy without at the same time pursuing mature relations with the leading power in our own Hemisphere, which, moreover, accounts for one fourth of the global economy.

On the contrary, we should seek to strengthen hemispheric relations, based on trade, investment, migration, and security ties; based on our shares values of democracy, liberty, and the defense of human rights; and based on the institutions we have nurtured for decades in the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Summit of the Americas, and the other institutions of the inter-American system.

In short, as we will see below, there is, without a doubt, ample room for hemispheric policy and a set of items of common interest, shared by all the



Ban Ki-moon visits OAS Headquarters, 2013

countries in America. And yet, it is also true that the outcomes of these past ten years have had major and lasting impacts on inter-American relations. Many of these changes stem from long before, especially since the broadening of the inter-American system to include Canada and the new Caribbean nations, since the end of the Cold War, and since the reaffirmation of democracy. However, the combination of those processes with the economic and political gains of the past ten years nourished a new sense of optimism, greater confidence in the potential of the southern part of America, especially to expand its relations with other regions, and stronger demand for equality in hemispheric relations.

That forum for dialogue and consensus-building that we call the inter-American system, with the Organization of American States as its hub, has undergone substantive change. It is not just a matter of changed priorities. Something more profound is happening: a change in the way countries conceive that unity and the conditions they set for achieving it. On the one hand, there is the democratic imperative, to which all countries have committed. But there is also a demand that, within the inter-American system, no countries predominate over others and that all be included and respected.

II

The document “A Strategic Vision of the OAS (Second Version),” that we submitted to the Permanent Council in early 2011, listed the “pillars” of the Organization, that the member states were to adopt more definitively at a special session of the General Assembly in 2014.

But, prior to that, we defined what, in our view, the OAS should look like in the Twenty-First Century: “An inclusive Organization, made up of sovereign, diverse countries legitimized by democracy, working, on an equal footing, to advance a hemispheric agenda, is what the OAS stands for in the Twenty-First Century, an Organization very different from the one imposed on us by the Cold War.”

That definition recognizes an undeniable fact: the parameters governing relations between States in the Hemisphere up to the last decade of the Twentieth Century can no longer encompass our unity today. The OAS of the Twenty-First Century is founded upon three principles: inclusion, sovereignty, and democracy. None of these principles is entirely new. Indeed, they are enshrined in the Organization’s Charter. However, they were frequently flouted and the distortions associated with the Cold War gave rise to exclusion, intervention, and dictatorship. That is what has now changed, forever. The equality of States, which before was a useful legal fiction, is now a demand pressed by all countries in the region.

We are convinced that, for all the changing circumstances, the OAS continues to be, by far, the most important political organization in the Americas. And that relevance will endure if we can effectively respect the three above-mentioned principles and if, whenever an incompatibility between them arises, by act by common accord to restore harmony, always acting multilaterally and never by imposition.

The OAS is no longer the only multilateral organization in our region. As mentioned earlier, as part of the way the Hemisphere has evolved, other regional entities, such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), have arisen. This organization, the most recently established subregional grouping, was founded with the intention of endowing the, in many ways homogeneous, States of Latin America and the Caribbean with a single voice for dialogue with other parts of the world and participating with greater clout in global politics. In that function, like the other subregional entities in the Americas, CELAC complements the OAS, which is the organization that links all the Hemisphere’s subregions and which, given its inherent heterogeneity, mainly seeks to foster dialogue among them and not to represent them with a single voice vis-a-vis the

**President of Cuba,
Raul Castro and
Secretary General
Insulza, Summit of the
Americas, Panama,
2015**



rest of the world.

The OAS's role, therefore, in the decade of profound transformation, is

not to compete with organizations or mechanisms that have arisen in order to perform other functions. Rather its role is to provide a clearer definition of our own priorities. While the days of Pan American definitions, generated by just one country, have long since passed -- such as the Good Neighbor Policy or the Alliance for progress -- conditions do exist for establishing a substantively shared agenda. That is what President Barack Obama sensed when, at the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009, he announced his readiness to "work *with you not for you.*"

The Organization of American States continues to be the principal international benchmark for political dialogue among all countries of the Americas, the place they all come to and from which they all speak, even if their voices are dissent and their views opposed. And if that is the case, it is because the OAS has never stood still. It has always been able to adapt to the enormous changes this region has undergone at each stage in its history. They posed new challenges which, positive or negative, always forced the Organization to transform itself.

It was the evidence that our region faces no major common external security challenges but rather the threats posed by increasing crime and violence, on top of natural disasters beyond our control, that led us to the 2003 Declaration of Mexico on Security in the Americas and the establishment, a few years later during my term, of our Secretariat for Multidimensional Security.

It was the crimes of the dictatorships that proliferated in South America a few decades ago, as well as the wars in Central America, that made it essential to establish an Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, sign the American Convention on Human Rights, and establish the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

When the OAS was founded it had no department of development, but our experience taught us that it was indispensable to tackle the many economic, social, and environmental problems of this region as rich in resources as it is unjust in their distribution.

It was our peoples' unflagging struggle for democracy that caused that form of political organization and its broad definition to become, for the past three decades, the main source of our Organization's unity. What was once a merely rhetorical aspiration on paper was transformed into a right of all the peoples of America and an obligation for their governments, as the first article of our Inter-American Democratic Charter proudly proclaims.

Our actions over the past ten years have been based on the insight that it is possible to project our more than 100 year history of peaceful coexistence into the future, in a collective effort to address today's challenges that may be summarized as the need to promote democracy, security and the development of the peoples of the Americas. The OAS was able to change because it had done so before, when other changes in its agenda became necessary. That conviction underlies the new strategic vision we put forward and which we have attempted to advance over these past years.

III

To advance that Strategic Vision, we drew on the OAS's major strengths. First, it has a history, energy and image that nobody can dispute. Even those who, day after day, proclaim "the crisis of the OAS" or the need "to overcome the OAS" cannot stop themselves from using it, day in, day out, as a benchmark. And many of them resort to the OAS as soon as they need to find an open and prominent forum, with a wide, diverse, and far-reaching audience to which they wish to expound their ideas and problems. They know there is nowhere else to go, where they can reach so many and where they are listened to with respect.

The OAS is, what's more, the depositary for all inter-American law. All the major legal instruments that still today govern relations among our State were signed and are deposited here. They amount to some 200 treaties, including the OAS Charter itself, the American Treaty on Pacific Settlement or "Pact of Bogotá", the American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San José), and the Additional Protocol of San Salvador on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Convention of Belem do Para on Violence against Women, the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, the recent conventions against all forms of discrimination and racism, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Social Charter of the Americas, and the Declaration of Mexico on Multidimensional Security.

Also deposited with our Secretariat are the instruments founding the Inter-American Development Bank, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, the Inter-American Commission of Women, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Children's Institute, the Pan American Health Organization, the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, and other entities.

In short, the OAS is the depository of America's law and institutions. A body of law and set of institutions that are very much alive and functional and that we strive to strengthen every day. This is where our spinal cord lies, embodying everything we have yearned and achieved with the peoples of the Americas: North, Central, Caribbean and Southern.

Then there is the hemispheric agenda. Defining it clearly and keeping it in tune with the times has been the chief task of the General Secretariat which, according to the OAS Charter, must also see to its implementation. It is in the definition of that agenda that the Strategic Vision materializes, moving from general pronouncements to specific policies and programs.

To establish our priorities in 2005-2015, we employed several criteria. First, those priorities had to address hemispheric issues, in two senses. There are matters that can only be discussed in the OAS, such as hemispheric trade, migration, the environmental problem, drug trafficking, and organized crime. Then there are matters that the OAS has held onto and that form part of the heritage it has developed over the years, such as human rights and electoral observation issues. Attempting to address these matters in another body would be redundant and scarcely credible. If someone attempted, for instance, to invent in another forum a Commission on Human Rights for the Hemisphere or part of it, such a proposal would not be credible. When the OAS deploys electoral observation issues (which are, moreover, embodied in the Democratic Charter), everyone waits for that mission's verdict, not that of other bodies who send their own missions. Much the same can be said of the subject of corruption, in which we follow-up on implementation of the corresponding Convention. Now, just as there are matters that can only be dealt with at the OAS, there are others that are more proper to each subregion and that can and should be addressed by subregional entities. For that reason, we did not include them in our definition of priorities for the 2005-2015 period and we adopted an attitude of cooperation vis-a-vis those subregional organizations that decided to address them as their own.

Second, the agenda is shaped by the great challenges. The pillars of the Organization are permanent but the specific contents of each one of them varies from one historical period to another. The programs corresponding to each pillar are reflected in the agenda, and match the challenges faced by our region at any one time. An example may serve to illustrate this: when the OAS was founded, in



Former President of Uruguay Jose Mujica and Secretary General Insulza

the midst of the Cold War, the security pillar referred mainly to collective defense in cases of an external aggression; today the pillar still exists, but its contents are directed much more toward public security issues, drug trafficking, and the new threats of which there was no mention in the definitions of 1948.

In most of our member states, the main challenges still have to do with democratic governance. No, however, it is not a question of restoring democracy, so much as ensuring that it is capable of delivering the results our peoples clamor for; that governments are not just democratically elected but also govern democratically.

To define our objectives, we took four challenges into account.

The first challenge was the persistence of poverty and inequality. It is true that our region is not the same region of three decades ago, that economic growth has reduced poverty and opened up prospects of a better life for many inhabitants of the region. And yet, those achievements have not, in and of themselves, made our societies more egalitarian. The number of the poor has fallen substantially, but the scourge of poverty, which is incompatible with true democracy, still afflicts more than 167 million Latin Americans. Above them, on the income scale, comes another layer encompassing one third of the total population of Latin America

who earn between 4 and 10 dollars a day. They have emerged from poverty but can hardly be described as "middle class." In reality, we are talking of millions of "non-poor" individuals with incomes that still render them extremely vulnerable.

The enormous injustice in our countries in the distribution of wealth and in access to social goods is wreaking havoc with the fabric of democracy. This is a problem for all of us, because the most developed countries in Americas are also experiencing growing inequality and the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few households, while major segments of society are excluded. And while it is undeniable that the way material resources are distributed is central to that inequality and exclusion, it must be admitted that both conditions derive not only from that distribution, but also from discrimination on the basis of class, race, gender, geographical origin, differences in physical ability and other grounds that, practiced in such a way that all or almost all members of a group are afflicted by it, renders it a phenomenon totally at odds with democratic ideals.

The second challenge is sustainable economic growth. The current growth cycle, supported as it has been by sound economic policies, still owes much to good prices for raw materials that have grown at a much faster pace than economies as a whole.

That trend appears to be coming to an end. ECLAC recently reduced its growth estimate for the region in 2015 to 2.2%, following similar projections by other international financial institutions. Even though the forecasts for next year are slightly better, they are still the lowest growth rates in several years -- with the exception of 2009. They are also below the growth rates projected for the global economy as a whole, as well as for other emerging and developing economies.

All this has happened before in the history of Latin America: periods of high growth followed by long periods of stagnation or low growth rates. Several explanations have been given for these negative cycles: the lack of sustained investment, inadequate infrastructure, and the lack of a well trained workforce, accompanied by excessive accumulation of wealth by a small upper class more inclined to consumption than productive investment.

Most of these constraints still exist in our region. Savings and investment remain insufficient, with negative repercussions for employment generation. Although exports have increased enormously in recent years, Latin America is still not fully inserted into the global economy and the subregional economic integration processes appear to have stalled over the past decade.

The diversification of exports, improved competitiveness of the productive sector, and debt sustainability are all essential if the region is to grow in the long term. Strengthening horizontal cooperation, the sharing of best practices, and the pursuit of initiatives designed to improve public policies and build institutional capacity are all key to supporting progress toward national development goals.

Equally vital is making sure that micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) -- which account for more than 90% of all businesses in the Hemisphere and employ nearly 70% of workers -- are fully integrated into the fabric of our economic and their production plans.

A third challenge is crime, especially organized crime, including drug trafficking and trafficking in persons, which are perceived as serious threats to our region. Some Latin American and Caribbean countries have crime rates that quadruple the global average. Some of our countries have the highest rates in the world. The increasing prevalence of organized crime poses a threat to democratic life and the number of American in jail surpasses that of any other region in the world.

The rise of drug trafficking, with its sequels of money laundering and other highly lucrative criminal activities, such as arms trafficking and trafficking in persons, have given rise to veritable criminal corporations competing for control of swathes of our national territories and even using illegally imported weaponry to contest the monopoly over the use of force by our police and armies. That undermines democracy and does enormous damage in a region that has not seen a major war for nearly a century and ought to be known as a zone of peace.

For its part, corruption, an evil endemic in some of our societies, provides fertile ground for political inroads by organized crime, which has no qualms about resorting to crime to deal with those who fight it, nor about buying whoever lets himself be corrupted.

However, corruption is not an offense derived from organized crime. It is a crime in its own right, which has been with us for a long time, which our societies and governments have not managed to suppress, and which, by sowing mistrust among citizens, inevitably impairs democracy. Public indignation with corruption stems from the fact that democracy in a society calls for greater transparency and openness. Today, there is less room for secrecy, for the hidden scheming on which corruption thrives. And it is that public outrage that makes it all the more necessary to act resolutely against illicit practices in society and in the State.

These challenges are not going to be resolved by the market, however much adequate levels of economic growth are needed to tackle them. They require decisive action on the part of governments and state policies to match their seriousness. Strengthening the state is not only needed to maintain governance, but also to adopt public policies and create public services that improve living standards for the people of Latin America, who believe in democracy but hope that their governments can make progress in solving these shortages and threats.

For that reason, the fourth challenge -- one that needs to be met if the others are to be resolved -- is democratic governance. Having legitimately elected, stable governments does not necessarily mean having strong governments. They



***President of Bolivia,
Evo Morales, OAS
Headquarters, 2008***

are, of course, stronger than they were a decade ago, but today they face multiple challenges from a much more empowered citizenry that demands solutions that the political sphere is not always able to deliver.

Democratic governance is the capacity of the political sphere to preserve a stable democracy, with full respect for human rights and the rule of law, while satisfying the needs of the bulk of the population. More than anything, it is the exercise of legitimate power without that legitimacy of origin, however large a majority voted for the governing party, ever serving as a pretext for a non-democratic exercise of power. Democratic governance also means that governments must be capable of governing effectively. A democratically elected government must have the power and proper conditions to govern its country effectively.

That ability requires the rule of law, combined with the strengthening of political institutions and of systems of representation. For that reason, political systems need to allow ample participation and facilitate the formation of solid coalitions and majority-backed governments. This, in turn, requires political parties to become more representative of the people and better qualified to participate in the process of building those majorities.

Finally, for democratic governance to come about there have to be permanent public institutions that are genuinely respected. This is probably one of the toughest problems to solve, because in many of our countries institutions are inefficient and over-politicized, or have simply fallen into disrepute. An independent judiciary, a properly empowered oversight system, a fair and transparent tax authority, and an efficient, honest police force are some of the institutions needed for democratic governance.

For all the above reasons, from the beginning of our term, we adopted a broad definition of what we intended to do with respect to democratic governance. Underlying that decision was the certainty that only by broadening democratic governance would it be possible to achieve other development and security objectives. The contents of our actions were geared to the following:

- Dialogue and the quest for points of consensus for peace and democracy;
- The strengthening and defense of democracy;
- Strengthening of the inter-American human rights system;
- Gender equality as a prerequisite for democracy;
- Transparency and resolute action against corruption;
- New policies to address the drug problem and drug trafficking;
- Public security, organized crime, and new threats;
- Economic growth, competitiveness, and sustainable development;
- Social inclusions, education, and the fight against discrimination.

Those were, in the light of our Strategic Vision, the priorities for the exercise of democratic governance that we pursued in 2005-2015.

In the coming chapters, we will develop these themes and describe the principal work programs to which they give rise. Naturally, they allow for ample cooperation within the inter-American system. Many of these concerns are shared by other institutions, which also have mandates and, sometimes, more resources to work with. Our criterion was always to involve ourselves in matters that are not only important. They also have to be areas in which we can make a real contribution.

We believe that all the programs expounded here meet those criteria. They respond to real and important challenges, are hemispheric in scope, and are areas in which the OAS can make a fundamental contribution to the region as a whole. That is why we made them our priorities.



*U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza
Rice with the Secretary General, 2005*

I- DIALOGUE IS OUR GREATEST RESOURCE

Between 2005 and 2015, the OAS broadened its role as a political forum of the Americas. The union of all the countries of the Hemisphere, the oldest and longest-running among all modern forms of regional political partnership in the world, was not achieved thanks to any unanimity of ideology or political views among its states. It was achieved because ideological and political differences among states have encountered at the Organization the necessary forum for debate and the legal and institutional framework for overcoming them on peaceful terms, with mutual solidarity and cooperation. Since 2005, this capacity of the Organization to provide a needed political forum gained strength. The OAS Permanent Council and General Assembly became the place where the region's countries could address and resolve their differences and conflicts.

The importance we attach to dialogue stems from the previously stated conviction that unilateral imposition is no longer possible at the OAS. Periods of intervention demonstrated the inefficacy of this approach before the end of the Cold War. As we have often said, the OAS is not a supranational body but a multilateral one. Alberto Lleras's famous statement that the OAS will be what its member countries want it to be is truer today than ever.

Even for restoring democracy to a country that has lost it, our resources are limited. Clearly, the only path still available is that of cooperation and dialogue. When a crisis arises, we go to where it happens; but we go unarmed and attempt to reestablish the dialogue that has been broken.

The importance of the OAS lies not in its alleged capacity to silence voices or punish political initiatives but precisely in the opposite--in its capacity to allow those voices and initiatives to be offered and explained. Essentially, the OAS is a political forum that fosters unity, not a body charged with censoring and punishing according to a given ideology or policy position.

This tradition, which prior secretaries general had already begun to establish, especially with the end of the Cold War, took stronger shape over the past decade and spread to other actors. We've said it many times: in a crisis, everybody comes to the OAS, because here they find not only visibility but the certainty of being welcomed and heard.



Inaugural Session VII Summit of the Americas, Panama, 2015

1- The Summits of the Americas

Four Summits of the Americas have been held over these 10 years--in Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago, Colombia, and Panama. The Summits have become the top forum of the inter-American system, with coordination by the OAS, whose role has been growing over these years, and with decisive and effective cooperation by the other international organizations that make up the Joint Summit Working Group.

The Summits have risen in stature, having not only achieved progress but also established important forums for cooperation among countries and institutions. The Summits of the Americas are where agreements were reached to conclude the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the Social Charter; to launch discussion of the Free Trade Area of the Americas; to establish the Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression; to create the Inter-American Social Protection Network; to produce the Report on the Drug Problem in the Americas; to establish an energy cooperation initiative; and to create a body to coordinate and strengthen education in the Americas. In that context, moreover, the Republic of Cuba has rejoined the hemispheric dialogue.

We hope, then, that the Summits will maintain the continuity they deserve as the principal forum for dialogue in the inter-American system, and that the role of the OAS in the Summits will continue to grow as it has over the past decade.

2- The Dialogue of States

Over these 10 years, 43 heads of state or prime ministers of OAS member and observer countries have visited the Organization's headquarters and its Permanent Council. Since 2005, they have come to the OAS or participated in its official events four times a year on average--to be heard, to describe their programs, to seek solidarity with their causes or advocate for their projects.

Also during this period, numerous special sessions of the General Assembly and special meetings of the Permanent Council have been held to discuss or report on situations occurring in some member country, every time one or more of them asked to use this forum. Some of the more recent such sessions or meetings, all of them attended by the foreign minister of the complainant country, were requested by Ecuador, to prevent violation of the immunity of its embassy in London; by Bolivia, to denounce the obstruction of the flight carrying its president in Europe; by Argentina, to denounce the situation caused by vulture funds; and by Venezuela, to denounce the United States decision to declare Venezuela a threat to national security.

By their presence, the heads of state and government and foreign ministers validated the OAS as a broad democratic forum for debate and the exchange of ideas--strengthened by diversity, not unanimity, frequently countering those who wanted to see it as an organization serving the interests of a particular state.

Pope Francis, Holy See, 2013



Numerous presidents, ex-presidents, ministers of state, and heads of international organizations have participated in our Lecture Series of the Americas, established over 10 years ago with the generous cooperation of the University of San Martín de Porres, in Peru. This initiative allowed the sharing of novel ideas in various fields of thought in the region, always addressing matters on our hemispheric agenda.

3- Ministerial Meetings and Specialized Events

In these years, the meetings of ministers of the Hemisphere, which operate under the legal framework of the OAS and receive technical secretariat support from its General Secretariat, stepped up their activities and broadened their reach. Throughout this period, the Organization has hosted and facilitated with technical and legal services the meetings of ministers of labor, education, culture, public security, science and technology, sustainable development, social development, tourism, and justice, as well as gatherings of prosecutors and attorneys general.

The OAS is the only inter-American body with an “all-of-government” approach. This is part of its purpose and a unique asset not found in any other regional organization in the Americas. Because the OAS is not a development agency, its position as a meeting place for all points of view gives it a decisive advantage in the promotion, formulation, and execution of more integrated development programs.

That recognition supported growth in the number of ministerial meetings over the past decade. The Executive Secretariat for Integral Development coordinates nearly a dozen meetings of ministers and high officials. Ministerial processes underscore the singular value of the OAS and reinforce what is, perhaps, the most consultative and holistic approach to policy- and decision-making at the hemispheric level.

In addition to these ministerial meetings, over recent years the Organization has increased its capacity to host and serve the inter-American commissions and committees and meetings of national officials and experts in various fields. Among the commissions, committees, or equivalents are the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission; the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism; the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission; the Committee to Coordinate

Cooperation Programs of the Inter-American System; the Justice Studies Center of the Americas; the Inter-American Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction; and the Inter-American Defense Board.

Among the meetings of officials and experts we should also mention the Working Group to Prepare a Regional Strategy to Promote Inter-American Cooperation in Dealing with Criminal Gangs; the Technical Group on Transnational Organized Crime; the Meeting of National Authorities on Trafficking in Persons; the Meeting of Officials Responsible for Penitentiary and Prison Policies in the Member States; the Meetings of Forensic Specialists; the Meetings of the Demand Reduction Expert Group; the meetings of expert groups on the laundering of assets, maritime trafficking, and chemical precursors; the Inter-American Dialogue of High-level Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise Authorities; the meetings of the expert groups on chemical precursors; the Inter-American Meeting of Electoral Authorities (RAE); the technical meetings and legal cooperation networks on access to justice, criminal matters, and cyber-crime; the meetings of the Inter-American Juridical Committee; the high-level workshops on access to public information, secured transactions, and commercial arbitration; the Conference of States Parties and Committee of Experts of the Mechanism for Follow-up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC); the Specialized Meeting of High-level Cooperation Authorities; the regular meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Ports (CIP); the annual Meeting with Authorities and Competitiveness Councils; and the meetings of the Assembly of the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL).

The increased dialogue among states has not only been in political or technical forums. Over the past 10 years, the General Secretariat designed and implemented cooperation networks in which countries of the region can identify priorities and discuss their experiences. These virtual networks have concentrated in particular on training, institution-building, and the development of effective policies. They are operating in the areas of natural disasters, energy, biodiversity, water resources, environmental legislation, cooperation, competitiveness, scientific journalism, teacher training, culture, the government labor sector, social protection, and tourism enterprises. The OAS also serves as Technical Secretariat to the Latin American and Caribbean Council for Civil Registration, Identity, and Vital Statistics (CLARCIEV); to the Network of e-Government Leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean (Red GEALC); to the Inter-American Network on Government Procurement (RICG); and to the Inter-American Cooperation Mechanism for Effective Public Management (MECIGEP).

4- Other Entities of the Inter-American System

Cooperation with the other organizations of the inter-American system, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), and the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), with United Nations bodies such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and with the World Bank has been crucial to us, not only because of our joint participation in the Summit Group, but also in their willingness to conduct joint action programs with the various units of our Organization. Inter-American cooperation is vital to the fulfillment of the many shared objectives that unite our Hemisphere.

Dialogue with the congresses of the Americas has also grown substantially in this decade. We have permanent ties with the regional parliaments, including ParlAmericas, the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino), the Andean Parliament, and the Central American Parliament, and with groupings of presidents of parliaments of the region. In addition to policy dialogue with them, the General Secretariat has supported concrete programs, such as the Open Government Partnership.

5- Support from the Observer Countries

We must also point out the ongoing dialogue with our observer states. Three of them (Spain, France, and Italy) have ambassadors to manage their permanent missions. Along with others who are very active at the OAS, they can keep this exchange going. The observer countries also make important contributions to our special missions in Colombia, Belize/Guatemala, and Haiti and support our electoral observer missions and other activities of importance to our Organization.

The OAS was the first international organization to accept observers and must be one of those with the highest number of them. But we should acknowledge significant differences in the level of attention paid to the OAS by

the various observers and their degree of political and material involvement with our activities.

There has been discussion of this topic in our Permanent Council, stemming from a General Secretariat proposal to potentially create a different form of membership for countries showing a greater commitment. In no way would this involve amending the essential precept that only independent countries of the Americas are OAS members. It would be a way to recognize observers who cooperate with us in a more significant and ongoing manner.

We have been able to establish multi-year plans with our biggest cooperator in this period, the Kingdom of Spain. This should be replicated with other countries. (We have a similar arrangement with Canada, recognizing this member country's special contributions.) This is a useful resource-planning tool that also allows proper evaluation.

6- Ongoing Dialogue with Civil Society

All of the above involves contacts, especially at public institutions, which are coordinated and arranged in various ways through us. But over the past decade the OAS has strengthened another of its roles in coordinating hemispheric dialogue, as it increasingly brings in civil society organizations. The Secretary General's talks with civil society are a permanent part of our General Assembly sessions. Over 700 nongovernmental organizations attend these dialogues and the subsequent meetings with presidents at the Summits and with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs at the Assembly sessions.

But this is not just a yearly event. The NGOs have access to, and participate in, many of our networks, have permanent access to our secretariats, and are formally included in the follow-up mechanisms for human rights, gender, corruption, disabilities, etc.

No institution in the Hemisphere deals with civil society with the assiduousness and seriousness that the OAS assigns to these activities. The recent Summit of the Americas represented a further step, placing the organization of the dialogue in the hands of the host country's own NGOs. This should continue as a way to affirm the importance the OAS places on civil society.

7- Public-Private Dialogue and Cooperation

During the period in which I served as Secretary General, dialogue and cooperation with the private sector in the Americas were strengthened significantly. Meetings of entrepreneurs have become regular events at our Summits and Assembly sessions; attendance at these events grows every year and the dialogue with the heads of state or ministers has been highly relevant. Also contributing to these closer ties are the many occasions on which the private sector of the Americas has met at the OAS or has invited the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, and other officials to its own events.

This vibrant ongoing dialogue has also strengthened our interaction and cooperation with the Trust for the Americas and with the Pan American Development Fund (PADF). Both of these organizations were created, and are directed, by members of the private sector.

We maintain ties with the PADF in the main countries in which it conducts its activities. We have worked together for several years in Haiti, Colombia, and other countries on programs of great importance. Its immediate and significant contribution every time a natural disaster occurs in one of our member countries, unfortunately quite frequently, has been a great source of support to the OAS.

The importance of the Trust for the Americas has increased impressively over the past decade by virtue of many of its programs, but most especially through its flagship program, the POETA Plan (Partnership in Opportunities for Employment through Technology in the Americas). This plan has sparked the imagination and cooperation of many to provide opportunities (in its initial phase) to persons with disabilities, later also including the broader universe of at-risk youth, so they will have stable jobs based on technical training.

The examples of dialogue are many and they will be amply covered in the following chapters. But we should recall that most conflicts that arose between or within our countries did not lead to ruptures but rather to intensive dialogue successfully concluded within the bodies of the OAS. These situations



Private Sector Dialogue, OAS General Assembly, Antigua, Guatemala, 2013

have included central issues such as the return of Cuba to the inter-American system, defusing the crisis between Ecuador and Colombia, the recent agreement on elections in Haiti, agreements between Belize and Guatemala, progress toward peace in Colombia, the common recognition that our drug policies have failed (which led to the Report on the Drug Problem and placed the Americas in the global vanguard in this area), the priority now given to topics of inequality and social inclusion (beginning at our most recent General Assembly session, in Asunción), and objections raised by some countries at the beginning of this decade on the work of the IACHR.



Presidents of Cuba and the United States, Summit of the Americas, Panama, 2015

II- DIALOGUE IS ONLY POSSIBLE IF IT INCLUDES EVERYONE

Cuba in the Inter-American System

The policy of dialogue and consensus-building has shown that the Hemisphere can move forward without impositions, which at this point would be impossible in any case. That is the main conclusion of the decade that is coming to a close. But in order for this dialogue to make sense, it must include everyone. The OAS Charter clearly says that all the states of the Americas who sign it are members of the OAS. Yet one member country, an original signatory of the Charter, was excluded from the OAS for over half a century.

That is the importance of the Cuba issue to the inter-American system, and it gives the measure of the historic event that took place at the Panama Summit.

When I had served as Secretary General for only a week, the thirty-fourth regular session of the General Assembly was held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The location lent itself to a debate on the presence of Cuba, given the large population of Cuban origin in that area. In that context, discussions and meetings were organized at various universities and other centers in Florida.

The President of the United States spoke extensively against the Cuban regime at the inaugural session and the Secretary of State did so as well in her speech. Among the countries present, over 30 had normal diplomatic relations with Cuba and had already voted to end the embargo in yearly resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. However, to this new Secretary General's great surprise, the topic was not addressed at the Assembly session. Cuba seemed to have disappeared from the OAS agenda. Frankly, the Cuban Government did not seem interested in having it addressed either--otherwise, some foreign minister of another country would have at least mentioned it. The frustrated attempt by the former Secretary General, Cesar Gaviria, in the mid-1990s to end this aberration seemed to have discouraged any new effort.

There seemed to already be a tacit agreement not to address the topic of Cuba at the OAS; this was arbitrary, but it allowed us to live in peace with an issue on which the countries of North America and most countries of Latin America

and the Caribbean would not come to an agreement. There also was no dialogue with Cuba over that entire period. When Honduras was suspended, for example, in 2009, the dialogue with Honduras' de facto government, institutions, and political movements continued, the intent being precisely to reestablish normalcy. Nothing like that had occurred in half a century.

The absence of Cuba and the Cuban issue, which lasted until after the Summit in Mar del Plata over a year later, could not, in our view, continue. We said so in various statements over the coming years, making it clear that our idea was not to impose the return of Cuba to the inter-American system without consensus, but that such a consensus would have to be sought in order to resolve the situation.

The General Assembly session in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, in June 2009, was for many reasons the time to reach that agreement. In the first place, several member countries had already raised the issue of Cuba's presence forcefully with the new administration of President Barack Obama. The arrangement that allowed the Summit of the Americas to proceed normally--this was the first Summit in which President Obama participated--was that the issue of Cuba would be addressed at the next General Assembly session. Secondly, the way the issue was raised made it more difficult to refuse some agreement: it was proposed to lift unilaterally the suspension of Cuba, which had come about through a 1962 resolution that many now considered entirely obsolete. Lastly, the day before the Assembly session, the only country of Latin America and the Caribbean that until that point did not have relations with Cuba (El Salvador) reestablished them.

Therefore, in June 2009, dialogue among the American states made it possible to lift the 1962 resolution of the Eighth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs that had suspended the Cuban Government from the OAS. The revocation of that decision constituted the removal of an anachronistic vestige of the Cold War at the Organization of American States, though it did not automatically open the doors of the OAS to the Cuban Government.

In view of Cuba's reticence in this area, it was established that, if the Cuban Government wanted to rejoin the Organization, it must express willingness to engage in dialogue with the Permanent Council on the topics on the regional agenda and the agreements reached in the half-century since Cuba had been excluded. Although obviously this dialogue would be no obstacle to its return, Cuba has not taken this option to date.

Nevertheless, the lifting of Cuba's suspension, decided by the General Assembly in San Pedro Sula, is the first direct antecedent to what took place in



***U.S. Secretary of State
John Kerry visits OAS
Headquarters, 2013***

April 2015 in Panama. At the Cartagena Summit in 2012, the demand for the absent member country to attend was much stronger; the host, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, summed it up neatly: “never again a Summit without Cuba.” Lastly, the invitation sent to the Government of Cuba in mid-November 2014 by the Panamanian President, Juan Carlos Varela, made

this outcome more imminent. Finally, the decision by the Governments of the United States and Cuba in 2015 to resume diplomatic relations is beginning to end a tense situation in our Hemisphere that lasted over half a century. It is an effort by all of Latin America and the Caribbean to strongly uphold the principle of inclusion, and this General Secretariat is proud of its participation in the effort. Cuba’s return to the inter-American system may take many different forms, but we have left the door fully open.



*Mission to Support the Peace Process
in Colombia (MAPP/OAS)*

III- PEACE IN THE HEMISPHERE

The Americas has seen fewer wars than any other region over the last century. While wars rage in other places, when a conflict arises in our Hemisphere, it is general taken before the International Court of Justice.

Since the Pan-American Union, the OAS's goal has been to preserve peace in the Hemisphere, as the guarantor of the Pact of Bogota on the Pacific Settlement of Disputes. Over the last ten years, the Organization has remained the stage where collective efforts are played out across the region to ensure peace.

1- Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP)

The conflict in Colombia is the sole remaining internal conflict in our Hemisphere and is on track to end. We have always recognized Colombia's right to resolve this conflict in a sovereign fashion and have offered our ongoing support throughout the decade.

The OAS is the only international body with a specific mandate to support the peace policy in Colombia, which it does through the Mission to Support the Peace Process (MAPP/OEA). For years, the MAPP/OEA has monitored and backed peace building efforts on the ground in the areas most afflicted by the internal armed conflict. It has interacted with all of the parties involved, particularly the victims, those on the path to reintegration, beneficiaries of land restitution, communities, social and religious organizations, local authorities, and public institutions, among others.

Since its creation in 2004, the Mission has verified the processes for disarmament, demobilization, and the reintegration of ex-combatants for the United Self-Defense Forces (AUC) and the Guevarista Revolutionary Army (ERG). This process led to the demobilization of more than 30,000 ex-combatants and the surrender and destruction of approximately 19,000 weapons. Between 2009 and 2010, a transitional justice framework was employed in Colombia, through which the Mission's scope was expanded. Its activities were focused on two primary

areas: the legal status of the demobilized and their reintegration and monitoring of the reparations policy for victims.

Between 2011 and 2014, the Mission renewed its efforts to attain a stable and lasting peace in Colombia by assisting the government in reparations for victims and land restitution under Law 1448. A three-year strategic plan and three annual operational plans were created to this end. The “Basket Fund” (*Fondo Canasta*) was also established, through which the principal donors make their contributions and finance the activities called for in the operational plans.

More recently, between 2014 and 2015, the Mission actively participated in advising the government on transitional justice, security conditions, and post-conflict matters. The Mission’s mandate was renewed through 2018 with new duties, including monitoring security conditions throughout the country, possible tasks in future demobilizations, and endorsing agreements.

2- Negotiation between Belize and Guatemala and the Mission in the Adjacency Zone

The OAS has also led efforts to obtain a permanent peaceful settlement to the territorial dispute between Belize and Guatemala. Between 1991 and 2000, both countries unsuccessfully carried out repeated bilateral efforts to solve the dispute through dialogue. Following numerous confrontations on the ground between the military forces of both countries, which resulted in the threat of breaking off diplomatic relations, the two governments resorted to the OAS.

In May 2005, when we assumed the General Secretariat, negotiation began on a new Agreement on a Framework for Negotiations and Confidence-Building Measures between the two countries. The purpose was to indefinitely extend the enforceability of these measures and move towards a new round of negotiations.

The agreement was signed on September 7, 2005. In February 2006 a new round of negotiations began to address the maritime border, with the involvement of Honduras as an invited party, since it shares a maritime border with both countries. According to the agreed negotiation framework, the agreements reached on specific issues would not enter into force unless there was

an agreement on the entirety of the matters defined on the negotiation agenda. Throughout the process, the parties did make significant specific agreements on maritime issues. However, given that the rules of international law dictate that the maritime jurisdiction of States derives from the territory belonging to each country and that, in this case, the land territory had not been defined, the parties were unable to resolve – after several meetings – the maritime matter.

Consequently, and after having exhausted all other political and diplomatic instruments, including those set forth in the Pact of Bogota, on November 19, 2007, we recommended that the parties file the dispute with the International Court of Justice. The countries accepted this recommendation and on December 8, 2008, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Belize and Guatemala took the most important step in the history of the dispute by signing the Special Agreement to Submit Guatemala's Territorial, Island, and Maritime Claim to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a definitive judgment. This was the first time the path had been paved for an equitable, honorable, and permanent settlement of the dispute.

In keeping with constitutional requirements, the parties must call simultaneous referendums to ratify the International Court's intervention. Following a first failed attempt to hold the referendum, the parties decided to concentrate their efforts on improving friendly bilateral relations. As a result, on January 24, 2014, the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Belize and Guatemala, in the presence of the Secretary General, adopted the Road Map for Strengthening Bilateral Relations, as well as an Action Plan with specific actions to be taken by both Deputy Foreign Affairs Ministers. On December 17, 2014 in Placencia, Belize, the Belizean and Guatemalan Ministers of Foreign Affairs, together with the Secretary General and in the presence of all of the Heads of State and Government of Central America, in the framework of the Central American Integration System, signed 13 bilateral agreements under the auspices and coordination of the OAS that directly benefit their people. These agreements, in addition to the other three agreements on security and intelligence that had been adopted three months prior, reflect the significant strides made in the process over the last ten years.

As this book was going to press, the two governments were dialoguing about holding the pending referendums, and even examining the possibility of holding them on different dates in each country. This decision, still pending formal approval, would finally place us one step away from the dispute settlement ruled by the International Court of Justice.

Over the course of the last ten years, the OAS has also deployed on the ground. The OAS Office in the Adjacency Zone serves as a civilian peace mission, which has maintained peace in the region. Since it was set up, there have been no recorded confrontations between the two countries' military forces. There have been, however, several incidents involving civilians, either among civilians or with

the armed forces of one or the other country. When this has occurred, the Mission has verified the facts and the conditions under which the incident occurred and reported back to the countries so that they may find a solution or, where applicable, reparations for the incidents. The Mission has also been involved in the transfer of the Guatemalan population in the Adjacency Zone, with the cooperation of member states and observer states making up the Group of Friends of Belize and Guatemala.

3- The Conflict between Ecuador and Colombia

On March 1, 2008, Colombian military and police entered Ecuadorian territory without the express consent of the Ecuadorian government to attack members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), who were in that country. The attack resulted in the death of the second-in-command of the FARC and 21 other militants. Some hours after the attack, the Colombian president called his counterpart, Rafael Correa, to claim responsibility for the actions. President Correa publically condemned the incursion of Colombian troops and accused Colombia of having violated international law by launching the attack. In response, he ordered the mobilization of troops to the shared border with Colombia and two days after the incursion, he suspended diplomatic relations with Colombia.

Colombia denied that the action had the intention of violating Ecuador's sovereignty and justified its actions under the right to use force in self-defense. Tensions rose once troops were mobilized to the borders.

Subsequently, the Ecuadorian president expressed his willingness to solve the crisis through diplomatic channels and submitted a request to the OAS Permanent Council to hold a meeting to discuss the matter. On March 5, 2008, the OAS Permanent Council adopted the resolution convening a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Ministers and requested setting up an investigatory mission headed by the Secretary General. The Permanent Council established the guidelines setting the parameters for the tasks and actions that the OAS Good Offices Mission in Ecuador and Colombia would perform.

We traveled to the conflict zone, visiting both sides of the border, in the company of several ambassadors from member states. The Mission reported to



**Secretary General Insulza visits
Ecuador-Colombia border zone**

the Special General Assembly one week later. In the interim, a regular meeting of the Presidents of the Rio Group – convened for other purposes – gave Latin

American presidents the opportunity to begin an initial rapprochement between the countries. On March 17, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs met and instructed us to use our good offices to reestablish diplomatic relations between the two countries. The report issued by the Mission of the Secretary General was approved in the Special Assembly and a resolution was adopted recognizing the territorial violation against Ecuador and calling on the parties to negotiate a peaceful settlement.

Both parties requested greater OAS involvement and, in keeping with the Assembly resolution, we created a Good Offices Mission whose first task was to establish an official channel of communication between the two countries, at varying levels of government, as a mechanism for rebuilding trust among strategic actors.

Through mediation efforts with officials at varying levels of government, including the Presidents and Foreign Affairs Ministers, the Mission sought out avenues for mutual understanding that could lead to the reestablishment of diplomatic relations. A window of opportunity was finally identified in the meetings with the Deputy Foreign Affairs Ministers, in which they agreed to organize a high-level military meeting and establish an advisory mechanism on border security matters. After the OAS facilitated the high-level military meeting, a security manual entitled "Safety Card" (*Cartilla de Seguridad*) was developed to manage contacts among the institutions guarding the border, in order to prevent new incidents.

The Good Offices Mission also worked with different sectors of society in both countries, especially to allow the border communities to participate in developing trust-building measures.

These mediation efforts began to bear fruit in 2009 when the Governments of Ecuador and Colombia decided to initiate a process of direct dialogue to normalize relations. On October 9, 2009, we attended a meeting between the ministers of foreign affairs from both countries. From this meeting a joint press release was issued and a trade office was set up in each country.

The OAS served as a witness and, upon request, in conjunction with the Carter Center, facilitated the process for creating three working committees. Finally, on November 26, 2010, the Presidents of Colombia and Ecuador announced the full reestablishment of diplomatic relations between their countries.

4- Costa Rica and Nicaragua

Following a long dispute between Costa Rica and Nicaragua regarding Calero Island on the San Juan River, on October 22, 2010, Costa Rica sent 70 police reinforcements to the border region and Nicaragua positioned some 50 soldiers on the island. The two countries adopted different approaches to resolving the problem. Nicaragua argued that it was a border dispute that should be settled by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), while Costa Rica maintained that it was a military incursion and that they should resort to the OAS for help settling the conflict.

Both governments agreed to OAS intervention to lessen tensions and to prevent a new flare-up of the dispute. We personally visited the area and drafted a report of the situation. As a result of this report, we asked both countries to withdraw their troops and law enforcement from the territory in dispute, as a first step towards re-opening dialogue to peacefully settle the matter and define the border to prevent further conflict. Costa Rica agreed to these terms, but Nicaragua refused to withdraw its troops.

In a special meeting held on November 12, the Permanent Council adopted – 21 votes in favor, one against, and three abstentions – a resolution demanding that Costa Rica and Nicaragua withdraw their troops from the conflict area along the shared border and initiate talks to settle the dispute. However, the Nicaraguan government decided to not withdraw its troops and ignored the OAS resolution.



Meeting with the President of Nicaragua Daniel Ortega, 2010

On November 18, 2010, Costa Rica lodged a formal complaint against Nicaragua in the International Court of Justice. This complaint alleged incursion, occupation, and use of its territory by the Nicaraguan military and the violation of the obligations entered into under the border treaty between the countries. It also filed a petition for precautionary measures, including the withdrawal of all Nicaraguan troops from Calero Island and the cessation of the canal construction on Costa Rican territory.

That same day, the OAS approved Costa Rica's request – 22 votes in favor, one against, and seven abstentions – to convene an advisory meeting with the foreign affairs ministers to study the border-area dispute between the two countries. The meeting was held December 7, 2010, in which a resolution was approved, calling on the parties to simultaneously implement, without delay, the recommendations set forth in its previous resolution on the matter.

In March 2011, the International Court of Justice ruled that Costa Rica and Nicaragua should refrain from sending or maintaining civilians, law enforcement, or police in the border area in dispute; although it allowed Costa Rica to send civilian teams to oversee environmental matters. Nicaragua received permission to continue the dredging of the San Juan River because it has sovereignty over the river itself. The issue is currently being examined by the Court.



*Former President of Guatemala Alvaro Colom,
Guatemala City, 2011*

IV-DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE: THE USES OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER

The Inter-American Democratic Charter is the most important document signed by the member states of the OAS since it was founded. Even though it is a declaration by the Assembly, its signing meant that democracy would no longer be, as in so many prior declarations, merely an aspiration of the peoples of the Americas, but a right, which would also give rise to an obligation for the rulers to respect that right.

Moreover, it is also difficult to find a broader definition of democracy than that contained in the Inter-American Democratic Charter. It includes, of course, selecting the authorities of the state through free elections, and then formulating concepts that go far beyond democracy of origin, so as to demand a democratic practice, with full respect for human rights, freedom of opinion and press, and the rule of law, respect for minorities, and gender equality. It then notes some fundamental bases of the democratic organization of government, such as the separation of powers and the operation of the political parties, it sets forth requirements of probity and good government, and it describes an interdependent link between democracy and development.

The conceptual content of the Charter is as broad and demanding as it is difficult to think of a country that is fully in line with all its precepts. On occasion we have indicated that in actuality the Inter-American Democratic Charter is a veritable “program for a Democratic Republic.” It is an ideal to which one aspires and it also serves a practical purpose, on allowing one to compare the reality of each country with that paradigm, and to determine how much progress has been made in constructing democracy.

Yet the instruments provided by the Inter-American Democratic Charter to act on its declared purpose of collectively defending democracy are much more limited. This is no accident if one considers that our organization is made up of sovereign states which, in joining it, were not seeking to yield that sovereignty. Similarly, the Inter-American Democratic Charter considers, for the purposes of the measures that can be adopted, two distinct situations: when democracy is at risk in a country and when there has been a rupture of the democratic order.

In the first case, the OAS can certainly act, sending missions from the Secretariat or adopting other measures. But that must occur by request, or at least must have the consent of the country in question. To carry out a collective action in the event of a rupture, the General Assembly must first declare that there has been a break with the democratic order and then act accordingly without requiring the assent of whoever has usurped democracy.

In 2007, at the request of the Permanent Council, we presented a report regarding compliance with the Inter-American Democratic Charter (see Annex 2). Later, in 2010, we supplemented that Report; and finally in 2011, 10 years after it was signed, a dialogue was held on the topic that took up a considerable part of the year. While it was accepted in that debate that a coup d'état was not required for there to be a "rupture" with democracy, the countries were reticent to immediately resolve what other circumstances could be considered "ruptures." In our report we suggested that the shutdown of a branch of government, the suppression of the media, or a massive and verified electoral fraud could all be interpreted as ruptures. Yet there was clearly no decision, and the interpretation of the provisions of the Inter-American Democratic Charter will be subject to the views of the Council or the Assembly in each particular case.

The practical result is that while the Charter has been used on several occasions, it was almost always invoked by a Government whose democracy is threatened or that is seeking to strengthen its position in its dialogue or negotiation with opposition forces. It has been used only once in these 10 years, in the unanimous response to the mid-2009 coup d'état in Honduras.

Having clarified the above points, whenever the Charter was invoked the Organization responded swiftly and generally obtained good results. Moreover, we have often affirmed that if in Honduras President Zelaya had not waited so long to invoke the Charter – he did so only two days before the coup – the OAS could have acted to impede it and to promote a negotiation. The same thing happened in the case of President Fernando Lugo, who preferred not to appeal to the OAS shortly before he was removed from office.

The first cases in which the Charter was invoked were not long in coming. In early June 2005, four countries of the Americas – Bolivia, Ecuador, Haiti, and Nicaragua – were undergoing political-institutional crises that were considered at the time to be placing their democracies at risk. In Ecuador, the government had been replaced a few weeks earlier; the Nicaraguan administration was exposed to a premature end; in Haiti, the slow process of voter registration put the elections at risk. During the Fort Lauderdale Assembly, the government delegates were informed of the resignation of President Carlos Mesa of Bolivia.

At the request of its governments, the OAS deployed special missions. In furthering the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the many mandates defined

by the member states, the Organization responded to the new challenges facing the democracies of the region in an innovative fashion, with missions tailored to the specific needs of each country.

Just one year earlier the environment that predominated in the General Assembly was different: the four crises described were quelled with the cooperation of the OAS.

Following is a brief description of each of the cases in which the Inter-American Democratic Charter was set in motion in the last decade.

1- Nicaragua, Facilitating the Process of Dialogue

The OAS supported the efforts of the Government of Nicaragua and several political and social actors to facilitate the dialogue between the Government and the main political parties of Nicaragua. A political crisis put at risk the governance that exists as a result of a normal interrelationship among the branches of government after a disagreement regarding the interpretation of constitutional reforms. The presence of the OAS in Nicaragua began, at the request of the Government, with a visit by the Secretary General, accompanied by members of the Permanent Council, immediately after the Fort Lauderdale General Assembly had concluded. After several days of initiatives there was no longer an imminent risk that the president would be removed.

We designated a special mission to provide accompaniment to the dialogue in Nicaragua, a task that was carried out from June to October 2005, when the so-called Framework Law was adopted.

The crisis in Nicaragua arose in the wake of the partial reform of the Constitution, approved in two legislatures with votes by legislators from the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) and the Partido Liberal Constitucionalista (PLC), which was not recognized by the Executive branch. The Executive decided not to publish the approved text of the constitutional reform in an effort to prevent it from coming into force. As a result there was a conflict between the Executive and the Legislature that had to be resolved by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled that the reform was constitutional, while the Central American Court of Justice viewed its application in a negative light, considering that it violated the principle of separation of powers and checks and balances among the different branches of government. Since the administration maintained its opposition to

the constitutional change, a discussion ensued about stripping the ministers of their immunity, and even stripping President Bolaños of his immunity. The dialogues among the three parties – the government, the Frente Sandinista, and the Partido Liberal Constitucionalista – were going nowhere.

In the context of this conflict among different branches of government, the government of Nicaragua, which had also faced off against the Supreme Court, invited the OAS to facilitate a dialogue.

The Framework Law that resulted from the negotiations incorporated the agreements reached by these political forces, including suspending implementation of the constitutional reform, and gave rise to conditions for conducting the elections normally. Even more important, the Law institutionalized the dialogue, creating a Roundtable for Dialogue (Mesa de Diálogo) with the presence of the Catholic church and the OAS as guarantors, which facilitated the legislative task. To give continuity to its work the OAS also deployed a broad electoral observation mission to accompany the regional elections and the 2006 presidential and legislative elections.

Adoption of the Framework Law for Stability and Governance of the Country provided guidance for resolving the political conflict in Nicaragua, bringing about conditions to ensure the stability of the government and the normal unfolding of the electoral process.

The mission unfolded in keeping with the provisions of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the declaration “Support for Nicaragua” signed in the context of the thirty-fifth regular session of the OAS General Assembly.

2- Bolivia, Accompanying the Electoral Process (2005)

In response to the resignation of President Mesa and the imminence of new elections, the OAS, in keeping with Article 23 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, deployed a special mission of accompaniment in Bolivia to support the political processes planned there: presidential, legislative, and gubernatorial elections; elections for a Constituent Assembly; and a referendum on autonomy. The terms of reference included electoral observation as well as political and technical cooperation for the Constituent Assembly and the referendum on autonomy.¹

1 . CP/RES. 885 (1499/05), July 2005.

The constitutional term of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada had been interrupted, and Vice President Carlos Mesa, who had succeeded him as per the Constitution, was exercising power in a way that put him at loggerheads with the Congress. In the midst of a strong social mobilization the President convened a National Constituent Assembly and presented the country with the possibility of electing governors (*prefectos*) to make progress on autonomy, which was a demand for which support was quickly growing in several regions of the country.

The OAS offered its technical cooperation to organize the Constituent Assembly. Yet President Mesa stepped down before the Organization could formulate a formal proposal for accompaniment. Society's rejection of political figures led the speakers of the two chambers of Congress to refuse to ensure the succession as between them, and, therefore, Eduardo Rodríguez, the President of the Supreme Court, was called on to serve as president on an interim basis.

The call to bring forward elections for president and legislators, as well as the first elections for governors, was one of his first presidential announcements. At that moment it was clear that the OAS could contribute by deploying an electoral observation mission whose impartiality would provide peace of mind to the actors in such a complex political scenario. With its permanent presence in the country, the OAS accompanied the national authorities and the Bolivian people in the search for paths of understanding that led to peaceful elections with the credibility and legitimacy necessary for them to be accepted by the contending actors.

The first observers arrived two months before the elections; by election day, December 18, 2005, more than 200 observers had deployed throughout the country. Their presence helped ensure the credibility and legitimacy of an election that had created great expectations. The OAS's contribution was possible due to its ability to convene all the country's political forces, and due to its fluid communication with all sectors of society.

Numerous government representatives, local and regional authorities, legislators, the business sector, and the candidates maintained contact with our Organization. The integrity of President Rodríguez and, beyond some misgivings expressed by a few candidates, the trust of the political parties in the Electoral Court, were fundamental for the success of the electoral process.

Six months later we also observed the elections organized to elect the members of the Constituent Assembly. Once again, the opinion of the observers was useful for attesting to the transparency of the elections. In the midst of the tensions surrounding both elections, the OAS offered confidence to the authorities, the candidates, and society at large; it rose up as a deterrent mechanism and contributed to validating the results.

3- Ecuador: The Re-establishment of the Supreme Court

In response to the request from the Government of Ecuador, the OAS established a special mission to accompany the process of selecting members of the Supreme Court. That mission was made up of special representatives and did its work pursuant to the provisions of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and in particular, with what is stipulated in resolution CP/RES. 883 of the Permanent Council, in which it asked the Secretary General of the OAS to make available to the Government of Ecuador the resources and experience of the Organization needed to support the strengthening of democracy there.

When the mission arrived in Ecuador, the country had not had a Supreme Court for over a year. Twice, in December 2004 and in April 2005, a legislative majority, with the support of the President of the Republic, removed the members of the Supreme Court, who they accused of corruption and of having ties with political parties. President Lucio Gutiérrez's approval of the dissolution of the Court led him to lose popular support. President Gutiérrez's exit from power was due to the Congress having declared he had "abandoned the post," as per the grounds stated in Article 167 of the Constitution, and it determined the constitutional succession of the then-Acting Vice President, Alfredo Palacio.

The Congress amended the Organic Law of the Judicial Function to determine the mechanism for electing the members of the Court at that moment. Through that reform, the Congress put in place an ad hoc mechanism to re-establish the highest judicial body given the impossibility of applying the system of cooptation provided for in the Constitution. Several sectors considered the reform of the Organic Law as well as the ad hoc mechanism stipulated by it to be unconstitutional, since the Constitution provides that the Supreme Court must be selected by its own members.

The main problem the mission faced was the population's skepticism. Ecuadorians were asking themselves: Will the best candidates be selected? Will the economic and political groups be influencing the decisions? Will the judges be able to act independently? The Mission met with party leaders, opinion makers, and journalists through whom it succeeded in bolstering confidence in the process, and highlighting the important role played by international and national monitors.

Several elements strained the political atmosphere in which the selection of the judges was unfolding. The discussion as to the advisability of convening a Constituent Assembly put the brakes on the process, since in the context of

this discussion there was a major confrontation between the Executive and the Legislature. In addition, the abrupt changes in the cabinet, particularly the minister of interior and the minister of foreign affairs, further compounded the political uncertainty. Notwithstanding all these problems the process was successful and culminated in the designation of a Supreme Court endowed with legitimacy.

According to José Antonio Viera-Gallo, our representative in the field, the experience of the OAS in Ecuador taught us a lesson about the need for the political actors and national public opinion to gain confidence as well as the importance of respecting the country's political culture. With its presence in Ecuador, the Organization helped guarantee transparency in the appointment of the judges of the Supreme Court and, therefore, helped bolster the independence of the judicial branch. The accompaniment included the participation of the OAS Secretary General in the swearing in of the new members of the Supreme Court, which was a decisive step in the process of normalizing democracy in Ecuador.

4- Haiti: Technical Assistance for the Electoral Process

The Haitian electoral process was a vital step for democratic stabilization after the 2004 crisis that led to the departure of President Jean Bertrand Aristide, violent confrontations in several parts of the country, and the coming to power of an interim administration entrusted to Boniface Alexandre as President and Gerard Latortue as Prime Minister.

The role of the OAS in strengthening Haitian democracy is long-standing. In 1990, the OAS observed the first free elections in the country's history, and since then has supported numerous national initiatives. Through the Special Mission in Haiti² the OAS undertook activities in the areas of human rights, justice, and security. In 2004 a political crisis led to the installation of a transition government and one year later Prime Minister Gérald Latortue asked the Permanent Council for support for the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP), the highest electoral authority in the country. During 2005, the Special Mission of the OAS focused its support for the CEP on preparation of the elections through an Electoral Technical Assistance Program whose mandate was to organize a massive voter registration campaign, as well as to develop the technology and logistics for the production

2 The Special Mission in Haiti was created by Resolution 806 of the Permanent Council in January 2002 - CP/RES. 806 (1303/02).



**Secretary General Insulza
with former head of
MINUSTAH Juan Gabriel
Valdes, Haiti, 2006**

and distribution of identity documents.

The OAS program had to overcome many obstacles to attain its objectives. First,

the technical work of the OAS staff was done in a polarized and volatile political context. On numerous occasions the technical aspects were at the mercy of political developments, which caused frequent delays. In addition, the security situation hampered travel in the country, and the limited infrastructure obstructed timely execution of the tasks entrusted. Finally, the divisions within a fragile electoral authority – still provisional – led to substantial delays.

Despite these difficulties the OAS achieved its purpose. It decentralized the registration process, installing 165 urban posts and 235 rural ones, at the same time as it deployed 100 mobile units. The results were better than anticipated: the Electoral Technical Assistance Program registered 3.5 to 4.4 million voters (80 percent of the electoral population), built solid voter rolls, designed the vote tally system, trained the electoral workers to use it, and even more important, laid the groundwork for a permanent civil registry and a new identification system. Our work was done pursuant to existing mandates and in close coordination with the United Nations and other members of the international community.

We were able to witness the elections personally – after they were postponed several times, and having dealt with any number of challenges. The results indicated that the winner was President René Preval.

5- Bolivia, Accompanying the Negotiation of Constitutional Reforms

In 2008 the OAS received a request from the government of President Evo Morales to facilitate the dialogue with the opposition in light of differences and conflicts related to the country's constitutional reform. Resistance on the part of various sectors, especially the governors and civic committees of the departments of the region known as the "Media Luna" ("half-moon"), who were demanding greater autonomy, was at the root of the conflict.

On March 4, 2008, Bolivian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship David Choquehuanca went before the Permanent Council of the OAS to request support for the referendum to approve the new Constitution. On April 26 and May 2, the Bolivian foreign minister once again addressed the Permanent Council to describe the political events then affecting the country and the constitutional government, and to request the assistance of the OAS under Article 17 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

In response, on May 3, 2008, the Permanent Council approved resolution CP/RES. 935, "Support for the Process of Dialogue, Peace, and for Democratic Institutions in Bolivia," in which it reaffirmed the willingness of the Organization to provide the Government of Bolivia the support needed for implementing the dialogue and strengthening its democracy. It also instructed the Secretary General to continue using his good offices to promote dialogue and build consensus in the country. To carry out this mandate, the OAS monitored political events in Bolivia through special representatives, who visited the country on various occasions, seeking to open channels of communication between political and social actors who at the time were not communicating directly with one another.

This exercise in mediation proved useful for establishing a dialogue through intermediaries, identifying areas of agreement, and using institutional channels to resolve political discrepancies. In October of that year we also participated in the conversations between the central government and the governors, and helped facilitate the dialogue among senators and representatives of all the political forces in the Congress. Finally, the OAS used its good offices and was present, along with other international organizations, at the negotiation that unfolded in the National Congress. The presence of the OAS facilitated the negotiations that led to a political agreement among the parties and the adoption of the new Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

6- Guatemala: The Rosenberg Case

Democratic stability was threatened in Guatemala on May 10, 2009, due to the assassination of attorney Rodrigo Rosenberg, who had previously recorded a video – which was made public – in which he blamed President Álvaro Colom and other persons in the circle close to the President for his death.

Due to the potentially destabilizing nature of these events, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, Haroldo Rodas, went to the Permanent Council and informed the representatives of the member states of what had happened in his country.

In response, on May 13, 2009, the Permanent Council adopted resolution CP/RES. 950 in which it expressed its support for the constitutional government of Guatemala and instructed us to offer the Organization's full support for the request for assistance by the Government of Guatemala to strengthen and preserve Guatemala's democratic institutional system.

Pursuant to the resolution, we travelled to Guatemala accompanied by the Secretary for Political Affairs to support the constitutional government. We met with the country's political and social leaders and we offered political and technical assistance to the Guatemalan government. The employment of preventive diplomacy by the Organization prevented the crisis from escalating and giving way to instability.

Shortly thereafter, the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala, a United Nations body that took charge of the investigation, concluded based on clear and convincing evidence that attorney Rosenberg had contracted his own assassination. The paid assassins and their accomplices were convicted, and President Colom was completely exonerated. The swift action of the OAS helped avoid a completely artificial crisis.

7- The Coup d'état in Honduras

On June 28, 2009, the Honduran Army removed President Manuel Zelaya as president and installed in his place the Speaker of the National Congress Roberto Micheletti. That same day the Permanent Council of the OAS approved resolution CP/RES. 953, condemning the coup d'état and failing to recognize the *de facto* government in a special session. On June 30, the General Assembly of the OAS reiterated its condemnation of the coup d'état under Article 20 of the Inter-American Democratic Center, declaring that in Honduras there was a rupture with democracy, and it instructed the Secretary General to lead diplomatic efforts aimed at restoring democracy and the rule of law.

On July 3 we made a brief visit to Honduras to report to the authorities in power on the resolution adopted by the General Assembly. The next day, we reported to the General Assembly regarding the situation in Honduras, and that same day a second resolution was adopted suspending Honduras from the OAS, invoking Article 21 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and supporting diplomatic efforts to reinstall President Zelaya in power. All the countries agreed on the resolution except Honduras which, represented by Manuel Zelaya himself, abstained in the vote.

In an effort to get Zelaya and Micheletti to the negotiating table, the former President of Costa Rica and Nobel peace laureate Óscar Arias offered his services as facilitator of the dialogue. The Government of the United States, the OAS, and the neighboring governments of Central America created an opportunity for that dialogue, on supporting the appointment of Arias as facilitator. On July 7, the Council gave its full support to the efforts of Óscar Arias. The first round of negotiation resulted in a proposal called the "Agreement of San José," which was not accepted in its entirety by either party.

On August 7, the Permanent Council of the OAS formed a Mission of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the region that travelled to Honduras to assess the possibility of the *de facto* government accepting the Agreement of San José. Nonetheless, Micheletti and his entourage steadfastly refused to accept it. With the return to the country, on September 21, of the constitutional President Manuel Zelaya, the direct negotiations became a possible option.

The next round of negotiations began October 7 and both parties agreed that the OAS should act as a facilitator. To witness the first session of this process, which was called the Dialogue of Guaymuras, the OAS sent a delegation made up of ministers of foreign affairs from several member states. The negotiations between the committees for Zelaya and Micheletti went forward through several proposals and counter-proposals. The dialogue was suspended on October

23, when the parties were unable to reach a compromise on the process for reinstalling President Zelaya. We then sent the Secretary for Political Affairs to serve as a mediator in the dialogue and, with his intervention, it was possible to overcome the impasse and the parties agreed to allow the Congress to vote on the restitution of President Zelaya. The Agreement of Tegucigalpa/San José was officially signed on October 30.

A Verification Commission was formed immediately after the signing of the Agreement, including two international members, former President of Chile Ricardo Lagos, and the Secretary of Labor of the United States. According to the timetable, the political authorities were to immediately form a united government for national reconciliation. Nonetheless, the negotiating committee was unable to reach agreement on the composition of the new government. On November 3 and 4, Micheletti installed a cabinet unilaterally, while we were appointing two special representatives to work with the Verification Committee in order to continue the negotiations aimed at developing a protocol for implementing the Agreement of Tegucigalpa/San José.

As was programmed, general elections were held on November 29. Porfirio Lobo Sosa, the candidate of the Partido Nacional, won with 53% of the vote. On December 2, Congress voted on whether to restore Zelaya. Despite the hopes that the different branches of government would reconcile after the events of June 28, only 14 legislators voted in favor of restoring Zelaya, while 114 voted against. On January 20, 2010, Porfirio Lobo Sosa signed the "Agreement for National Reconciliation and Democracy" with the objective of resolving the internal tensions, as well as making reparation for relations with the international community. Lobo Sosa took office on January 27 and included members of the opposition in his government as a sign of his commitment to national reconciliation and to stable political relations.

The return of Honduras to the OAS took one more year, as some countries opposed recognizing the recent elections. Honduras was finally readmitted in May 2011.

8- Institutional Crisis in Paraguay

On September 7, 2009, we visited Paraguay at a moment when, lacking political agreements, the government was experiencing difficulties promoting its reform agenda. Our presence and the meetings we held with different political actors helped underscore the importance of having stable institutions and opportunities for dialogue. On December 16, 2009, we sent a mission to support the efforts of the administration of President Fernando Lugo aimed at engaging in a political dialogue with different sectors of society to overcome the obstacles to the implementation of its policies and addressing the nascent challenges to democratic stability. The mission evaluated the situation and offered assistance to the government to facilitate a national dialogue, which ultimately did not take place. A subsequent incident provoked by armed groups in the North of the country led to a rupture between the Executive and the Congress, and then to the impeachment proceeding against President Lugo. At that point we suggested to the President that he invoke the Inter-American Democratic Charter, but he declined to do so.

Finally, President Lugo was removed by impeachment on June 22, 2012. We traveled to Paraguay on July 1, heading up a special mission of permanent representatives for an on-site visit to collect information on the country's situation. The report of the mission underscored the shortcomings in the removal process and the need to strengthen Paraguay's democratic institutions.

In the wake of that mission, we sent six additional missions to Paraguay to promote a national democratic dialogue to pull together political actors and civil society for the purpose of reaching a consensus on key matters of governance. The last three missions were led by former President Óscar Arias. The visits, which involved conversations with the government of President Federico Franco, President-elect Horacio Cartes, and other political forces was aimed at fostering stability to avoid future political crises and to strengthen democracy.

As a result of these efforts, during his election campaign Horacio Cartes called on the parties to work together to reach agreements on key issues. The proposal of a "Minimal Agenda" was an open invitation for a political dialogue involving various sectors of Paraguayan society. Its purpose was to generate a discussion in order to reach points of consensus around the structural problems that stood in the way of advancing the implementation of public policies in the country.



Electoral Observation Mission to El Salvador, 2014

After his election as President, Cartes renewed his call for support for a National Dialogue. At the request of the incoming administration, the OAS, along with the United Nations, provided technical assistance and held several meetings, including some with the president-elect, with the goal of developing a proposed work plan and discussing its possible content. On June 30, 2013, at the beginning of the new session of the Paraguayan Congress, Horacio Cartes and representatives of the main political parties signed a political accord called the "Agreement for Paraguay."

V- DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE. OAS DEMOCRACY-BUILDING PROGRAMS

1- 105 Electoral Observation Missions in 10 Years

Since the first election monitoring exercise in Costa Rica in 1962, the Electoral Observation Missions (EOM) of the OAS have been both eyewitnesses to the region's political processes and an expression of support for those processes. They are one of the most important items in the Organization's toolbox for strengthening democracy in member states. Over the course of more than five decades EOMs have been evolving in tandem with political change in the Hemisphere's countries. They have gone from being ad hoc missions to standardized and institutionalized mechanisms whose impact extends beyond polling day.

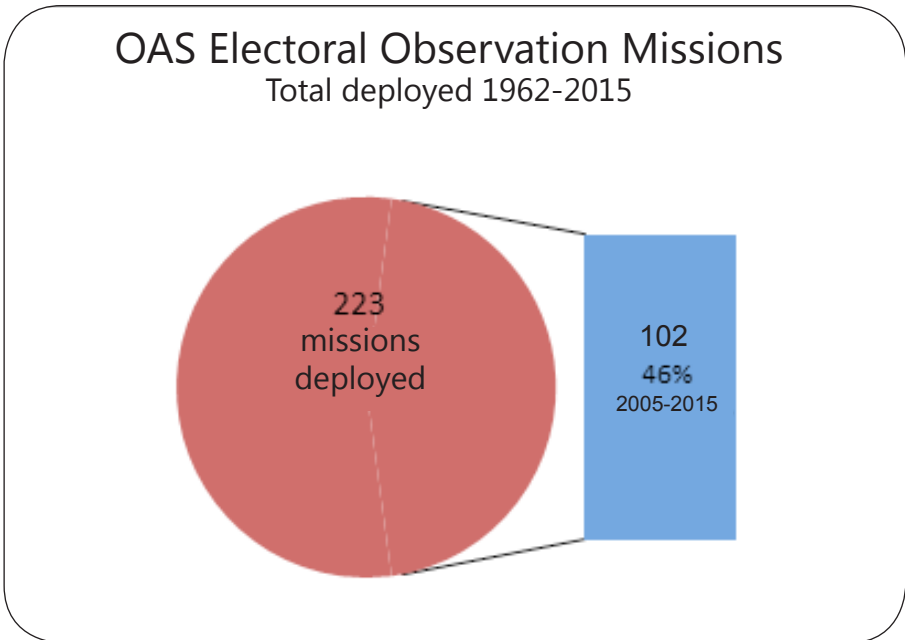
Almost half of all the electoral observation missions deployed by the OAS have taken place in the last decade, encompassing the vast majority of our member countries. It is almost symbolic that on the very last day of my administration—May 25, 2015—there will be an observation mission in Suriname.

The remit of EOMs has also expanded significantly in that time: (a) to fulfill the principles of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which envisages the deployment of preparatory observation missions when so requested by countries;

(b) to observe at the request of member states, not only general and national elections, but also plebiscites, regional polls, and even events involving specific ethnic groups; and (c) to include other issues in their observation activities, such as gender and minority-group participation.

The first year of my administration saw the launch of an initiative to professionalize and increase the number of electoral observation missions. In October 2005, the OAS and 20 other³ organizations signed the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers, undertaking, among other things, to respect the sovereignty of those countries and to be impartial in their observation activities.

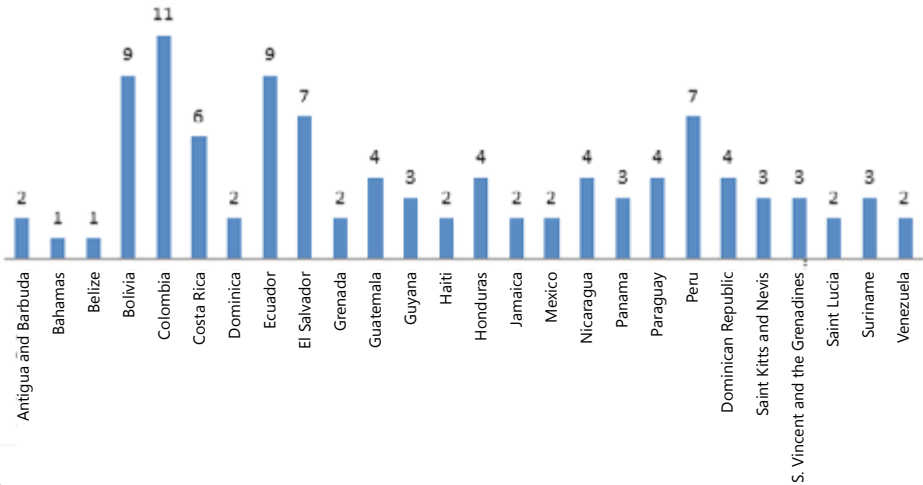
The following year, the Organization's electoral observation activities took a qualitative leap forward with the implementation of the first OAS electoral observation methodology⁴, which laid out the criteria and methods to be used by the Organization in observing elections. That methodology introduced the concept of democratic elections based on the fundamental rights recognized in the various legal instruments of the inter-American system.



3 Among the 20 signatory organizations are: the United Nations, the African Union, the Carter Center, the European Commission, International IDEA and IFES

4 For more information, see: Criteria for Electoral Observation: A Manual for OAS Electoral Observation Missions, OAS, 2008.

Missions Deployed by Member State 2005-2015



Under my administration, the OAS made considerable strides with the introduction of technical and methodological tools that enable EOMs to gather critical—and very often unprecedented—information on electoral processes. That conceptual evolution reflected a paradigm shift in international election observation from an approach that centered on election day itself to a more holistic overview of the election cycle.

During that same period five other methodologies were developed for observing key aspects of the election cycle, including:

- Use of electoral technologies
- The role of the media
- Gender equality
- Political-electoral financing systems
- Participation of indigenous and Afro-descendant populations

The information garnered from implementing those methodologies has enabled the OAS to offer technically sound recommendations to member states on improvements for strengthening electoral processes.

The missions have begun to examine hitherto overlooked aspects, such as:

- Election security and electoral offenses
- Dispute resolution processes and mechanisms (electoral justice)
- Overseas voting
- Participation of persons with disabilities

The pilot programs implemented during this term are paving the way for the development of new methodologies that will contribute to increasingly thorough observation.

In addition to conceptual advancements, the OAS designed tools to systematize and augment the transparency of the work of electoral observation missions. For instance, an international observers database was put together, as was one that compiles all the information on each mission deployed since 1962. The second tool places particular emphasis on follow-up on the recommendations of missions. The Manual for OAS Electoral Observation Missions precisely defines the objectives of OAS EOMs: what is observed, how it is observed, and mission organization and implementation procedures.

The design of these methodologies and of clear procedures has allowed missions to focus their attention on recommendations to help improve equity and transparency in democratic systems. An approach of centering on long-term improvement of election processes has brought a substantial increase in requests, demonstrating the importance that member states attached to these efforts. Of the 223 missions deployed in 53 years, 102 (46%) were dispatched in the last 10 years.

It is also worth noting that in 2005-2015, six countries requested the presence of an electoral observation mission for the first time: Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Mexico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and The Bahamas. In all, the OAS has fielded missions to 26 of its 34 member states, for a total of 5,000 international observers on the 102 missions deployed.

In recent years, efforts have been made toward increased inclusiveness in the staffing of missions. There has been an emphasis on inviting representatives of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, women, and persons with disabilities to participate.

On average, the percentage ratio of men to women on missions has been 60% - 40%. Over the last decade, however, the number of women taking part and occupying leadership positions in observation missions has risen: 10 women in the region have been mission chiefs, while 14 have been deputy chiefs. Women have been deputy chiefs of mission on more than 50 of the deployments in 2005-2015.

2- Electoral Cooperation

In the 1980s, what we know today as technical cooperation was directly linked to electoral observation missions. From the 1990s onward, the OAS began to provide electoral technical assistance to the new elections authorities that emerged from countries' democratic transition processes, particularly through long-term projects whose main emphasis was training and institution-building for the new organs.

In the last decade, the OAS moved away from the handout approach in implementing electoral programs and shifted its focus to improving their internal capabilities, making them more efficient, and enhancing the quality of the services they offer the public. To do so required establishing a link between the recommendations of electoral observation missions—which identify the main challenges and areas for improvement in an election process—and the design of cooperation projects that address the most important needs of electoral organs, apart from meeting specific cooperation requests.

The main thrust today is to help modernize and improve quality of service in the electoral organs of member states.

To oversee the project execution cycle in an orderly way, the OAS set up a projects and computerized applications database, designed as a repository of electoral projects that the OAS manages in a variety of areas, including legislative reform, electoral computer systems, electoral rolls, electoral mapping, electoral organization and logistics, electoral administration, management, and quality certification, promotion of citizen participation, and horizontal cooperation, among others.

Apart from projects, the database contains comprehensive information on agreements, technical documents, profiles, budgets, and experts who took part in each project. The result is an automated system to record and monitor technical and organizational data that is constantly updated.

Thanks to technical cooperation projects:

- The National Electoral Council of Ecuador has strengthened its technical, human, and institutional capabilities, enhancing its capacity to successfully implement a quality control system.
- In Guatemala, the electoral roll was updated with a personal identification system, swelling eligible-voter registration from 83.6% to 89.4%.
- The Plurinational Electoral Organ of Bolivia has been provided with a diagnostic assessment, recommendations, and a plan of action expected to be implemented in the first quarter of 2015 to improve the quality of the biometric electoral roll.
- The Supreme Elections Tribunal of Costa Rica decided to allocate additional funding and time for improving implementation of its electronic ballot system for voters living abroad in future elections.
- Uruguay's Elections Court instituted security measures in areas of its computer systems, reducing risk exposure and bolstering data protection.

All OAS cooperation projects and activities have been important for the organs that have benefited from them. However, certain projects warrant particular attention in light of their impact, especially in Bolivia, Dominican Republic, and Grenada.

1.- Bolivia. After a new constitution was adopted in 2009, the now-superseded National Electoral Court (CNE) faced the daunting challenge of assembling a new biometric electoral roll in time for elections scheduled for December that year. To assist in that process, the OAS designed a major technical cooperation project and deployed experts from the region to help with voter enrollment. The registration of more than 5 million inhabitants in just three months was a stunning achievement by the country's election authorities and made the cooperation project a resounding success.

The OAS sent two work teams to Bolivia, which coordinated closely with each other. The "technical team" provided expert technical support to the CNE in the areas pinpointed in the operational plan, which included electoral organization, computer systems, mapping, communications, and electoral laws. The other team, dubbed the "mobile group," deployed electoral consultants in each of the country's nine departments. Their principal goal was to monitor the process on

the ground with a view to submitting an independent report to the CNE on the progress of the biometric registration process and proposing corrective measures as needed.

Each of the experts in the mobile groups was in permanent communication with the departmental electoral courts (CDEs) and with the OAS coordination unit headquartered in La Paz. Daily the consultants compiled and sent updated information from each of the country's zones on the status of the enrollment process at the departmental level.

The OAS supplied technical cooperation through activities carried out in each phase of the project. We designed a critical path identifying task sequences and implementation responsibility to adequately monitor the process. It provided advice on the social media and mobilization components based on a validated communication strategy and a brainstorming approach. The technical mission was also tasked with helping with the induction process for the guiding discourse and management model. As a result of this process, we proposed to accelerate the induction process for members of CDEs (judges and line directors) by providing them with basic information to swiftly integrate them in the enrollment project.

The nature of biometric enrollment meant that the computer systems component was a highly important part of the process. OAS mentoring encompassed perimeter security and the system's NOC, digital communications review, and the construction of the data center.

As a result of the enrollment process, in three months (August to October 2009) the CNE managed to register more than 5 million Bolivian citizens, including ones living in the United States, Spain, Argentina, and Brazil. The upshot is that Bolivia now has an electoral roll that meets high international standards, including digital photographs, fingerprints, signatures, and demographic information, such as voter names, ages, and addresses.

2.- Dominican Republic. In December 2011, the president of the Central Elections Authority (JCE) of the Dominican Republic formally requested the OAS to make the necessary arrangements to conduct an audit of that country's electoral roll.

We deployed a team of international experts to perform a comprehensive audit by means of a systematic review of a number of areas and processes that make up the electoral roll. The audit included a review of the electoral roll's legal framework, a review of the processes for updating and purging the roll, and a review of computer processes.

At the end of the audit we presented a report containing findings and recommendations on each of the areas examined. The observations and findings were presented to the JCE.

The report also included a number of short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations to be implemented ahead of the May 2012 elections that would generate greater confidence among the political parties and actors involved in the election process and support the JCE in its improvement efforts.

3.- Grenada. In January 2013, the Prime Minister of Grenada requested technical assistance from the OAS in assessing and examining the integrity of the new voter registry system.

The rationale for approaching an international agency to conduct an independent assessment and verification of the voter registration system was to provide assurances that the coming general elections, set for February 2013, would be free and transparent.

We agreed and dispatched a team of experts to Grenada to conduct the review. The experts evaluated legal factors, technical aspects, and procedures associated with voter registration in that country.

They met with election officials, relevant state institutions, political parties, and civil society groups to gather information and exchange views about the process. They also worked in close collaboration with their counterparts in the elections authorities to assess the technological components of voter registration and the integrity of the database. The team also carried out a statistical study to evaluate the electoral roll's coverage. A report was presented to the electoral authority upon the project's completion.

A group of professionals submitted their findings and conclusions in a report addressed to the Office of the Prime Minister and the Parliamentary Elections Office in February 2013. The document covered the following substantive areas: an analysis of the legal framework; a study of the voter registration process from a practical and procedural standpoint; an analysis of technological processes and a design report; and the findings of a house-to-house survey.

The last section of the report contained findings and recommendations designed to improve the accuracy and inclusiveness of the voter roll. The OAS-reviewed roll was accepted by the country's political forces and used to hold the 2013 elections.

3- Quality Management

ISO 9001:2008 and the Creation of Technical Specification ISO/TS 17582:2014

The technical cooperation provided and expertise acquired by the OAS in recent years have served as building blocks for the Organization to develop the world's first international electoral standard. February 2014 witnessed the publication of ISO/TS 17582:2014, a quality-management system design and implementation tool for electoral organs that provides a uniform basis to evaluating elections and under which electoral authorities worldwide can be certified.

ISO/TS 17582:2014 is an international management system standard developed by a group of electoral experts led by the OAS, under the auspices of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), that adapts the principles of quality management to the electoral arena. It is based on ISO 9001, the innovative quality management standard that has become the most successful international certification standard in history.

The primary function will be to accredit agencies that certify electoral authorities under ISO/TS 17582:2014. It will be a key control of the certification process under the ISO electoral standard. Thus far, we have received formal requests from Colombia and Bolivia to begin their certification process under the new standard.

The ISO/TS 17582:2014 applies the quality management system concept to elections. Given that the principles established by the quality management system are universal and can be applied to any kind of organization, it provides a specific framework for electoral authorities to adopt a quality management system. The standard's main strength is its holistic nature, which means that it can be applied to all activities undertaken by electoral bodies, strengthening communication, reducing the possibility of overlap among departments, and, in general, leading to greater operational efficiency. It also acts as a comprehensive guide as to what an effective electoral management system entails, as well as an objective yardstick for assessing performance.

The design of a quality management system varies depending on the legal framework, the organizational environment, and the political culture in which the electoral authority operates. While the requirements of all standards are generic, they can be adapted to any election process, be it at the local, regional, or national level.



Civil Identity Program in Haiti

ISO/TS 17582:2014 does not require uniformity in the structure of electoral quality management systems, or even in documentation. The purpose of the system is to guide the electoral organ in providing a consistent and trustworthy electoral service that meets the requirements of “electoral clients,” be they voters, candidates, or political organizations participating in the election process. All that entails the development of an electoral service development plan tailored to the needs of the organization, contingency planning, record-keeping, measuring process effectiveness, and implementing corrective measures to address shortcomings.

The decision by electoral authorities to adopt a quality management system is a strategic one. Implementation and certification of quality management systems under the ISO electoral standard is completely voluntary, and it will be at the service of either permanent or temporary electoral authorities.

As well as playing an active part in the standard’s development and publication, in May 2014, the OAS established the International Electoral Accreditation Body (IEAB).

Despite its pivotal role in bringing the standard into being, the OAS will not be directly involved in the certification of electoral authorities. Acting through the IEAB, the Organization’s task will be exclusively to accredit agencies that certify electoral authorities under ISO/TS 17582:2014.



OAS Mobile Registration Unit

The launch of the IEAB will have a global impact as it will be in charge of certifying agencies not only in the region, but also worldwide. Certification will be based on thorough audits performed by certifying agencies. Under the ISO model, all certifying agencies must be accredited by an external organization; that is, an accrediting body. At present there are no accrediting bodies other than the OAS; nor are there any certifying agencies with experience in electoral matters.

Certification of electoral authorities under ISO/TS 17582:2014 involves four main functions: accreditation of certifying agencies, authorization of individual trainers and auditors, auditor training, and final review of certification decisions.

The establishment and implementation of the IEAB once more reflects the firm commitment of the OAS to continued support for institution-building efforts and the attainment of the highest standards of quality and development where electoral authorities are concerned.

4- The Right to Identity:

Universal Civil Identity Program in the Americas (PUICA)

Every day, somewhere in the Americas a child is born whose birth will go unregistered. Without a birth registration, their lives will begin in exclusion and they will have only limited access to medical checkups and the necessary vaccines for the first months of life. A few years later the child will want to go to school but without a birth certificate he or she will be unable to finish the school year. Upon reaching majority of age he or she will be unable to obtain an identity card, open a bank account, become part of the formal economy, or exercise

political rights. His or her existence will go unnoticed by the state, which will have no record of their name, parentage or potential, or take them into consideration upon planning its social policies. That is a need felt by many in our countries.

Our efforts in the area of civil registration date from 2005, when we responded to a request from the Government of Haiti to grant identity documents to the majority-age population in advance of general elections scheduled for the following year. In barely three months more than three million Haitian citizens were registered and received their first-ever identity cards, which incorporated modern security features, biometrics, and a unique national identity number.

A decade later, the Program on Modernization and Integration of Haiti's Civil Registry is the largest technical assistance initiative to advance civil identification in the region, having provided technical support for the National Identification Office to issue almost six million adults with national identity cards. Today, those cards are used in multiple daily activities, including voting, engaging in commercial transactions, and seeking government benefits.

In 2008, mindful that birth registration and the right to identity are the gateway to exercising all other rights, the OAS General Assembly, held in Colombia, adopted a resolution entitled "Inter-American Program for Universal Civil Registry and the 'Right to Identity,'" which instructed the General Secretariat to provide member states that so request with assistance in enhancing their civil registry systems and advancing universal civil registration.

The adoption of that resolution marked a turning point in the OAS strategy, with the focus shifting away from national projects to a broader program with strategic objectives and lines of action that, starting in Haiti, was to branch out to 19 countries in all. The aim of PUICA, to use the Program's acronym, was to build up government institutions responsible for granting individuals legal recognition, not only to promote universal civil registration, but also to make identity documents more dependable. Working alongside domestic authorities, the program helps to issue birth certificates, rectify errant information, and replace documents destroyed in conflicts or natural disasters. Even more important than immediate steps taken to provide a person with a civil identity are the program's endeavors to get its national counterparts to consolidate and sustain such efforts.

The priority for civil registries in the Americas 10 years ago was their technical resources. Registration procedures were mostly manual and registry systems were paper-based and composed of large, unwieldy archives. Over these past 10 years the OAS has assisted Haiti, Paraguay, Belize, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with the digitization of tens of millions of vital records, including births, deaths, marriages, and adoptions—in some instances dating back to

the 19th century—that serve as the basis for robust civil registry systems. In Huancavelica, Peru, an area particularly hard-hit by internal armed conflict, the program arranged the recovery of more than 70,000 birth certificates which were delivered to citizens, as well as over 600,000 records which were catalogued and sent to the Civil Register Office.

Infrastructure only provides a means to achieve the ultimate goal of complete elimination of underregistration in the region. Together with civil registry authorities, the OAS has played an important role in issuing tens of thousands of people in rural areas, indigenous communities, and border regions of Guatemala, Paraguay, Bolivia, Mexico, Ecuador, and Peru with birth certificates and identity documents for the first time.

However, not everyone without an identity lives far from city. In an area known as Bordos del Río Chamelecón on the outskirts of San Pedro Sula, Honduras, PUICA arranged mobile campaigns that issued more than 2,200 birth certificates and 1,700 identity cards.

The specific efforts mentioned above and many others like them helped to lower underregistration in the region from 18% to 7% over the last 10 years. The challenge now is to try to consolidate those achievements and implement systems that make access to an identity easy and free.

PUICA has developed and rolled out a hospital-based methodology that has borne immediate fruit. We have partnered efforts in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to set up registry offices in hospitals, so that no child leaves the health facility without his or her birth certificate. In those three countries, OAS support has enabled hospital registration coverage to go from zero to upwards of 55% in six years and over 225,000 births to be registered.

Another good example is Haiti, where PUICA assisted the Ministry of Justice and Public Security with the launch of a registration campaign for newborns that involved installing civil registry offices on maternity wards in two hospitals located in vulnerable areas of Port-au-Prince. In a nine-month period, registration rates doubled and 14,198 newborn infants received a birth certificate.

The steps taken have directly helped nearly 20 million people to obtain a birth certificate or national identity card for the first time, allowing them to exercise their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

5- 10,000 Judicial Facilitators Paving the Way to Justice

Judicial facilitation is a service provided by justice-sector institutions with the participation of citizen judicial facilitators. Judicial facilitators are mediators without judicial powers, who are selected by a community assembly and appointed, trained, and supervised by a local judge. They have no judicial authority and only act when consulted or upon request. They operate within their community, village, or neighborhood in a completely voluntary and apolitical way and without need of an office. They have emerged as a response for improving access to justice for vulnerable populations. They help bring justice wherever justice is delayed.

At the start of my administration in 2005, the OAS country office in Nicaragua launched a judicial facilitators project in poverty-stricken rural municipalities in order to reinforce the state's presence in those areas. The success of that initiative led it to become a national judicial facilitators service. In 2007, with the establishment of the Inter-American Judicial Facilitators Program in the OAS General Secretariat, the initiative acquired an international scope, expanding its work into other countries in the region.

Between 2005 and 2014, what started life as a successful small-scale effort in one country burgeoned into a mass-impact cooperation program that now operates in eight countries and is available to the whole of the Americas. In that time, the number of judicial facilitators has risen 15-fold, with 9,155 people serving in that capacity as of December 2014. Over the same interval, 4.5 million people living in vulnerable circumstances have had access to a facilitator in the countries where the program has the broadest coverage (Nicaragua, Panama, and Paraguay), the equivalent of half those countries' poor.

Over the past 10 years, judicial facilitators have provided more than 0.5 million documented services to members of the public. They have kept an estimated 100,000 cases out of the courts, a clearance rate higher than that achieved by any single judicial system in the region in one year. They have acted as a bridge between the public and officialdom, carried out tasks entrusted by judges, prosecutors, and other officials, and referred to the authorities situations or cases that they have been unable to resolve. They have also performed an efficient preventive role by disseminating information on rights and laws, offering guidance and advisory services on request, and providing mediation or conciliation services in disputes. In figures, they have offered talks on rights and laws to 790,000 people, provided



OAS Judicial Facilitators

guidance or counseling to 200,000, and mediated in 92,000 disputes. Their efforts are believed to have benefited more than 1 million people.

This achievement is largely sustainable. The program is designed to operate at a minimal cost (volunteer facilitators, training provided by local judges in their chambers, etc.) and strengthen extant judicial organs without creating any new or special bodies.

The program has delivered hundreds of training courses to ensure that judges and justice-sector operators were equipped with the necessary knowledge and expertise. In 2008 it cobbled that training into an online diploma course available to authorities and officials on a variety of tiers in different institutions and countries. By late 2014, 10 simultaneous versions of the diploma course had been imparted in seven countries, with 6,706 officials (judges, government attorneys, police, defenders, etc.) graduating. The diploma course has enabled 2,778 police graduates to work as facilitators and, thus, strengthen their working ties with the community. Implementing this initiative entailed forging partnerships with 10 state and private universities, which have lent academic recognition and cooperated free of charge.

A sustained affirmative action effort in the form of motivation and promotion work by the program's technical team succeeded in raising the proportion of women facilitators from 18% to 40% in 2004-2015. The recognition of their leadership role by families, communities, and institutions, as well as the instruction that they have received, has profoundly changed the lives of thousands of women facilitators, who stand as an example to tens of thousands of women in their communities, neighborhoods, and villages. Through their work, facilitators—both female and male—have settled hundreds of parentage cases at no charge; they have successfully arranged and enforced maintenance payments. Their talks and the timely counseling that they provide on gender violence have helped to prevent this social ill. Where they have been unable to prevent it, they have brought it to the attention of the authorities and, if necessary, have stood by the women in the process.

One of the program's most important impacts has been seen in the courts. Thanks to the program, courts have expanded their coverage and been unburdened by cases that can be prevented or settled out of court, allowing them to concentrate on more-complex offenses and situations as well as on prevention. Under judicial leadership, the judicial facilitators service has improved linkage with the institutions of justice. The public's opinion of and trust in the courts has also revived. From the 44 judges who were working with judicial facilitators at the start of 2005, 743 local judges (justices of the peace and misdemeanor courts) now do so in 2015. This rapprochement between the public, on the one hand, and judges and officials, on the other, has transformed the sensitivity of judicial public servants, humanizing the face of justice, generating a culture of service, openness to the community, and prevention of social conflict.

It was in recognition for its results and impact that the OAS Inter-American Judicial Facilitators Program won the 2011 Innovating Justice Award, presented at the Peace Palace in The Hague, The Netherlands, by a prestigious consortium of academic organizations in that country.

In addition to supporting the introduction of national judicial facilitators services and providing training to justice-sector operators, the program was assigned the task of supporting other access-to-justice initiatives. Among them was the Project on Creation of Mediation Centers of the Office of the Attorney General in Ecuador in 2009-2011, as was the project on support for training mediators at the Judicial Academy Mediation Center in Honduras, in 2014. It has also contributed to civil identity work in several countries.

Thanks to horizontal cooperation arrangements made by the program, in the last three years alone 272 judges and officials have participated in experience exchanges in other countries, while hundreds have mobilized within their own countries to benefit from lessons learned and direct peer training. Furthermore, 10 judges have served as trainers in other countries and four have cooperated with the program on secondment to assist with its rollout in new countries.

The Inter-American Judicial Facilitators Program has been an effective democratic-governance promotion and strengthening tool. In regions that are among the most violent in the world or where there is a high level of judicialization of ordinary social disputes, the program has helped transform a culture of confrontation and impunity into one of peace and lawfulness. By raising awareness of such rights as the right to identity among the neediest sectors and teaching them their rights, it has improved their ability to exercise their citizenship fully.

6- Combating corruption

The Inter-American Convention against Corruption (IACAC) and its follow-up mechanism (MESICIC)

In these 10 years at the helm of the OAS General Secretariat, the Mechanism for Follow-up on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC) has completed its first four rounds of review and cemented itself as the primary inter-American legal cooperation instrument in the fight against corruption.

Though an intergovernmental agency, the MESICIC offers abundant room for civil society participation. It assists its 31 states parties in implementing the provisions of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (IACAC) through a peer evaluation process conducted on an equal footing in its review rounds. The reviews give rise to specific recommendations to states on ways to improve their legal and institutional frameworks for confronting corruption, fill gaps, and correct shortcomings detected in the process.

Apart from reviewing implementation of the IACAC by its various states parties, the MESICIC is also a useful forum for exchanges of information and mutual cooperation in the area of best practices in prevention, detection, and punishment of corruption by those states.

MESICIC has passed the following milestones in the past 10 years:

- Completion of four rounds of review in which 114 country reports were adopted
- 30 on-site visits conducted to an equal number of countries. The visits were conducted to examine 134 oversight bodies in charge of prevention, investigation, and punishment of acts of corruption in those countries. Participating in them were 856 state authorities and 189 civil society organizations, private sector entities, professional associations, scholars, and researchers.
- Adoption of hemispheric reports on the first four rounds of review, summarizing the main recommendations formulated by the Committee of Experts to each state party together with an overall assessment of follow-up findings on measures adopted by them to implement those recommendations. The fourth round alone describes 1,240 such measures, which include the laws adopted, training activities, institution-building, and inter-American and international cooperation.
- Adoption of progress reports on implementation of the Convention that summarize measures annually reported by states to advance that process.
- Preparation of legal cooperation tools by the Technical Secretariat of the MESICIC to help countries fight corruption. Those tools include the systematization of information furnished by member states, guides for lawmakers, model laws on prevention measures under the IACAC, the Criminal Matters Network, and the Anticorruption Portal of the Americas (a webpage currently under development on the OAS website).

One tool aimed at getting around the obstacles that hinder the adoption of legally binding standards are the Model Laws. Those instruments, whose use is increasingly gaining ground in the inter-American system, have the virtue of being negotiated, so they include the highest possible standards on a given subject matter and, as non-binding instruments, do not create onerous burdens for the members of an organization. An added benefit of model laws is that countries can use them as legislative guides to pass internal legislation, adapting them to their realities and possibilities, or gradually incorporating them as their systems develop. In 2010, the Organization adopted the Model Inter-American Law on Access to Information and its Implementation Guide, triggering the adoption of a slew of laws in the Hemisphere in a way perhaps not achieved for some time through an international treaty. From 2011 onwards, in particular, the General Secretariat threw itself into the task of assisting member states by holding workshops on implementation of that model law. The result: A large number of countries enacted their own such laws and established national authorities to hear complaints on specific cases of government officials refusing to release public information. Successful initiatives are there to be seen the length and breadth of the Hemisphere, making the Americas a role model for other regional blocs.

Likewise, we promoted model regulations for registration relative to the Model Inter-American Law on Secured Transactions, approved in 2009. A modern secured-transactions regime is a critical legal mechanism for arranging access to credit and ensuring its flow to the private sector. All of the foregoing help to stimulate sustainable growth, foreign investment, increased competitiveness in credit markets, lower unemployment, and higher living standards, with the attendant strengthening of the rule of law and governance in countries.

7- Strengthening Governance

Program on Effective Public Management and the Inter-American Mechanism (MEGICEP)

Effective public management is a critical element for strengthening democratic governance in the region. Many of the difficulties that our governments face today have nothing to do with corruption or wrong policy decisions, but simply a lack of quality in executing those policies.

As a result, the hurdles faced by democracy have evolved in recent years and, increasingly, the challenges occur in the daily exercise of citizens' rights. Democratic governance is strengthened when democratically elected governments can rely on a state apparatus able to meet and respond in a transparent, efficient, effective, and sustainable way to citizens' needs.

In January 2010 we created the Department of State Modernization and Good Governance with the objective of enhancing the capability to provide a coordinated and integrated response to needs identified by member states in the area of institutional capacity-building in order to improve public-sector management and make the benefits of democracy more palpable.

So it was that the Program on Effective Public Management emerged as the most recent initiative of the Secretariat for Political Affairs. Its aim is to contribute to strengthening public institutions in the region into order to make them more transparent and effective, as well as to equip them with citizen participation mechanisms.

The program has four main components: the Inter-American Cooperation Mechanism for Effective Public Management (MECIGEP), the Inter-American Prize for Innovation in Effective Public Management, the Observatory of Strategies and Mechanisms for Effective Public Management, and the Database of Innovative Experiences in Effective Public Management.

The MECIGEP is a voluntary intergovernmental arrangement whose purpose is to serve as a forum for peer dialogue and mutual learning among participating states, in which countries can share and discuss experiences and opinions on institutional reforms in the public sector with a view to enhancing the efficacy of their public administrations.

The mechanism is designed to enable different countries, under a common framework proposed by the participants, to: (i) analyze key effective public

management issues; (ii) identify successful initiatives and hurdles to overcome; (iii) and determine specific technical assistance needs and opportunities, in order to facilitate horizontal and multilateral cooperation for the benefit of public administration in participating countries.

The MECIGEP is based on thematic “rounds” held to examine a variety of public management issues, such as open government, planning, public budget, the civil service, and interagency coordination mechanisms, among many others. The topics to be discussed are decided by the participating countries.

This process is strictly technical in nature, involving high-level specialists and experts from different countries who analyze and present recommendations for improving management in the area selected by the beneficiary country. The peer dialogue takes different forms, including on-site visits by experts, video-conferences, and document sharing, among others.

At the end of the process, reports are drafted that outline, in general terms, the findings of the peer dialogue, cooperation needs, and recommendations on reforms, innovation, and modernization in public management.

At the General Assembly held in Guatemala, on June 5, 2013, the OAS member states adopted resolution AG/RES. 2788 (XLIII-O/13) “Effective Public Management Strengthening and Innovation Initiative in the Americas,” which established “a hemispheric cooperation mechanism on governance aimed at bolstering public administration in member states through dialogue, mutual learning, and technical cooperation by which to enable efficient, transparent, and participatory public management.”

The First Meeting of High-Level Authorities on Public Management in the framework of the MECIGEP was held in Panama, in March 2014, to present the mechanism, receive comments and suggestions from the authorities present, and approve an operating methodology. The delegations present made clear their satisfaction and their desire to set the mechanism in motion. The Second Meeting of High-Level Authorities on Public Management, held in March 2015, received a report on the results of the Mechanism’s first year of operation, after which the member states expressed their support for the initiative’s continued implementation in the region.



OAS Secretary for Political Affairs Kevin Casas-Zamora and Former President of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias in EOM/Paraguay

The Inter-American Prize for Innovation in Effective Public Management was launched as part of the Effective Public Management Program with the purpose of identifying, recognizing, and rewarding innovative public-management initiatives in the region. Competition for the prize is open to all public administrations in the region, with the winners selected by a panel of international experts.

All initiatives nominated for the prize are entered in the Database of Innovative Experiences in Effective Public Management, which is an innovation tool open to consultation by the public managers community and the general public. It contains actual experiences on topics such as human resources, public policy planning and evaluation, open government, institutional coordination mechanisms, and public policy quality.

The program's fourth component—the Observatory of Strategies and Mechanisms for Effective Public Management—is an information tool open to consultation by the public managers community and the general public that contains information on 13 public management topics in different countries in the region. The topics are: long-term vision, national strategies/planning, public budget, professionalized civil service, coordination, evaluation of policies and programs, competitive regulatory frameworks, transparency and accountability,



***Executive Secretary of the Inter-American
Commission of Women Carmen Moreno***

services, citizen participation in public management, and policies with a gender perspective.

General Assembly resolutions AG/RES. 2788 (XLIII-O/13), "Effective Public Management Strengthening and Innovation Initiative in the Americas," and AG/RES. 2838 (XLIV-O/14), "Assistance to Member States: Effective Public Management Strengthening and Innovation Initiative in the Americas," and the statements issued by member states at the Meetings of High-Level Authorities on Public Management (Panama 2014 and Mexico 2015), at meetings of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs, and at meetings of the Permanent Council, in addition to the reference to this topic in the Strategic Vision of the OAS, are indicative of the political endorsement that this initiative enjoys.

Since the MECIGEP was implemented, three rounds of review have been held and the respective reports cum recommendations adopted. Those rounds are as follows:

- **Beneficiary country:** Brazil
- **Topic:** Development and Implementation of the Federal Government Personnel Management System
- **Collaborating countries:** Mexico and Uruguay

- **Beneficiary country:** Dominican Republic
- **Topic:** Public Services Management Model
- **Collaborating countries:** Ecuador and El Salvador

- **Beneficiary country:** Paraguay
- **Topic:** Collective Labor Relations and Salary Policy
- **Collaborating countries:** Argentina and Chile

In the two editions of the Inter-American Prize for Innovation in Effective Public Management held so far a total of 130 entries have been received from 18 countries. To date, prizes have been awarded to eight initiatives and public institutions.

The Database of Innovative Experiences in Effective Public Management contains information on more than 100 actual public-management initiatives encompassing a broad range of topics and institutions in 18 countries in the region. The Observatory of Strategies and Mechanisms for Effective Public Management has information on 13 public management topics in 24 countries.

VI- GENDER ASPECTS

The last decade has seen a substantial shift in the prioritization of the gender approach and women's rights in OAS work. This change in priorities – explicitly repeated in our statements and speeches – enabled the OAS to reassert its role as a hemispheric benchmark on these issues.

At the end of our administration, the Assembly General continues to adopt more resolutions recognizing the additional barriers that women might face to their full participation in the political, economic, and social arenas. Ministerial and other meetings increasingly address the gender, diversity, and human rights approach in their work. The OAS is beginning to identify and disseminate concrete results from its work to strengthen its position as an organization that responds to the demands of women and men throughout the region.

The strengthening of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) is the prime example of how important the issue is for the OAS and the region. The CIM has convened an ongoing dialogue with an increasingly broad and diverse number of women and has signed partnership agreements with several partners – UN Women, national mechanisms for the advancement of women, supreme courts, feminist NGOs, and human rights NGOs – to multiply the impact of its work to promote and protect the rights of women.

The legal and political framework surrounding women's rights in the Americas is the most robust in the world after Western Europe⁵. It bears noting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women (CEDAW) and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará). Women enjoy a wide range of legal rights on an equal playing field with men.

However, as UN Women notes, "...In all societies, women are less powerful than men and the two areas in which women's rights are least protected, where the rule of law is weakest and men's privilege is often most entrenched are first, women's rights in the private and domestic sphere, including their rights to live free from violence and to make decisions about their sexuality, on marriage, divorce and reproductive health; and second, women's economic rights, including the right to decent work and the right to inherit and control land and other productive resources."⁶

5 OECD. *Atlas of gender and development: How social norms affect gender equality in non-OECD countries*. Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2010, p. 92, http://www.oecd.org/document/50/0,3746,en_2649_33935_44810034_1_1_1_1,00.html

6 UN Women. *Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012: In Pursuit of Justice*. New York:

Every country in the region has established an operational framework for these rights in their domestic legal systems through a governmental authority responsible for women's rights and gender equality, what we generically call "national mechanism for women." The degree of authority that these entities have and their technical capacity vary significantly from one country to the next and, in most cases, they continue to be among the government agencies with the fewest financial and human resources, least influence over the public agenda, and weakest authority to work in across sectors, although, this is starting to change in some countries.

With the adoption in 2000 of the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality (IAP), States undertook a strong commitment to formulate public policies, strategies, and proposals aimed at promoting women's human rights and gender equality in all spheres of public and private life, considering their diversity and their life cycles."

It also entrusted us with the task of "systematically [integrating] a gender perspective in all organs, organizations, and entities of the inter-American system." As such, the CIM and other relevant bodies have a strong mandate to ensure an institutional framework for a gender, diversity, and rights-based approach in all OAS work.

Member states have reaffirmed their commitment each year to the full implementation of the Convention of Belém do Pará and the IAP through OAS General Assembly resolutions, as well as through the Summits of the Americas process. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the priority given to these topics in Permanent Council deliberations and, therefore, in the hemispheric political agenda.

With a view to supporting and expanding this commitment, the CIM created the *Integrated System of Indicators of Women's Human Rights* (SISDEHM) to assist OAS member states in bringing their laws and economic and social public policies in line with binding international agreements on women's rights and gender equality. This System of Indicators – the first of its type in the region – integrates seven rights: economic, education, work and social security, health, sexual and reproductive, and political.

Furthermore, over the same period, and in partnership with UN Women and International IDEA we published two studies. The first, "Women's Citizenship in the Democracies of the Americas" (2013),⁷ reflects and casts a critical eye on democracy through various perspectives, viewpoints, concerns, and proposals. The text provides an analysis of the democratic system, going beyond just the

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, p. 11, <http://progress.unwomen.org/pdfs/EN-Report-Progress.pdf>

7 Available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/cim/democracy.asp>

representative and institutional aspects; it delves into other areas of life like gender, multiculturalism, pluriethnicity, sexual and reproductive citizenship, and global citizenship, among others. The second study, "Banking on Parity: Democratizing the Political System in Latin America (the cases of Ecuador, Bolivia, and Costa Rica),"⁸ critically and systematically documents and analyzes the processes that led to the approval of parity. It identifies that factors and important actors that influenced the process and evaluated the implementation processes for the related laws.

As a follow-up to these studies, the Inter-American Commission of Women has provided ongoing analysis of how women exercise their political rights in the Hemisphere, placing particular emphasis on parity. Given the persistent political exclusion that women face and the sluggishness of change, countries have recognized the urgency in recent years in making strides in this area. Democracy has been repositioning parity as a comprehensive strategy, which tends to correct deficits in representative democracies, as well as making it an overarching democratic principle.

Ecuador and Bolivia were the first countries in the region to adopt parity, enshrining it in their constitutions in 2008 and 2009, respectively. Parity laws apply to all public offices in general, as well as political parties. Later, between 2009 and 2013, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Mexico adopted parity, primarily for positions subject to popular vote and political party leadership. Against this backdrop in which parity emerges as a plausible solution to the problem of women being excluded from politics, the work of the OAS over this period has had a two-pronged focus: the scope of parity between men and women in all spheres of political life, and lending visibility to and eliminating violence and harassment against women in political and decision-making positions.

On a different front, although lack of public safety affects the entire population, women suffer from violence, dispossession, human trafficking, and other security-related problems differently than men. Although all human rights exist in both the private and public spheres, violence against women (particularly domestic violence) is still considered by society to be a private problem to be resolved by the couple, instead of seeing it as a threat to women's safety and democratic governance.

The year 2014 was the 20-year anniversary of the adoption of the Convention of Belém do Pará (1994) and 10 years since the creation of the Follow-up Mechanism (MESECVI). The States in the region still have a debt to settle in terms of violence and discrimination against women. The rulings stemming from both the inter-American human rights system and the international system lay bare this historic debt and the fact that so much remains to be done to fulfill the duty to respect and guarantee women and girls' rights to live free of violence and discrimination.

8 Available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/cim/democracy.asp>

Since 1994, the 32 States Party to the Convention have undertaken significant efforts to advance in building a fairer, more equitable, and equal world for women. In 2014, MESECVI adopted the *System of Indicators for the Implementation of the Belém do Pará Convention*, which measures States' efforts to guarantee women a life free of violence using specific tools to evaluate the status of women's rights in each State Party.

According to the latest State reports submitted to MESECVI based on the System of Indicators,⁹ the high rates of violence and its multiple expressions against girls, adolescents, and women lay bare the need to expand the efforts taken by the States Party to reflect the severity of the problem.¹⁰ Against this backdrop, the CIM has held workshops in several countries throughout the region to promote the use of the System of Indicators and assist in the full implementation of the Convention. To this end, a series of conceptual and practical tools have been published.¹¹

One of the most innovative areas of progress for the Inter-American Commission for Women during this OAS Secretary General's term was the creation of various forums for cooperation, knowledge and exchange of best practices and lessons learned to advance women's rights. Starting in 2013, several meetings were held to exchange best practices on topics such as gender justice and violence prevention. These have enabled the States, the international community, and civil society organizations to identify what remains to be done, as well as the tangible achievements made locally, nationally, and regionally that could provide a framework for future efforts.

As part of these efforts, the CIM also launched a diploma program on "Justice, Gender, and Violence" in 2014. The diploma seeks to provide justice operators throughout Latin America (law enforcement, public defenders and forensic experts, human rights defenders, and other interested professionals) the basic knowledge and analytical and practical tools necessary for effectively protecting women's human rights, in keeping with constitutional, regional, and international obligations undertaken by States.

The gender approach was also adopted by the OAS General Secretariat itself. To this end, we entered into an agreement with the Government of Canada to implement the "Project on Gender Mainstreaming in the OAS," which was coordinated by the Inter-American Commission for Women. In the first phase of this project, training was given to 200 officers of the General Secretariat, with

9 Available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/NationalReports.asp>

10 MESECVI. *Regional Tools to Fight Violence against Women: The Belém do Pará and Istanbul Conventions*. Washington, DC: Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention, Organization of American States and Council of Europe, 2014, p.17-21, <http://www.oas.org/es/mesecvi/docs/MESECVI-CoE-CSWPub-EN.pdf>

11 Available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/mesecvi/library.asp>

particular attention given to those responsible for the execution of programs and policies. In the second phase, seven workshops for specific areas were held and a further 125 officers were trained. In this phase, tools were provided in response to specific needs in several areas of the General Secretariat. Additionally, a gender mainstreaming manual for staff members was designed, containing tools for gender analyses.

Within the ministerial meetings and in compliance with the IAP's mandate to integrate a gender perspective in the preparation and implementation of international instruments, mechanisms, and procedures, in particular the agendas of ministerial-level meetings, the CIM developed the SEPIA initiative ("Follow-up of the IAP"). This enabled it to present recommendations to the ministerial meetings in the areas of labor, justice, education, and science and technology, and to develop lines of action for implementing them, in conjunction with the ministerial mechanisms and in collaboration with civil society, government experts, other entities of the OAS, and specialized organizations.

Furthermore, we decided to instruct the OAS Project Evaluation Committee, whose Secretariat falls under the Department of Planning and Evaluation, to assess the relevance and importance of the projects underway and of the proposed projects, bearing in mind the attention they paid to crosscutting issues, including gender. This measure, as a concrete example of political will, has been essential to preparing specific tools and strengthening the capacity of the OAS's staff in responding to this mandate.

In 2008, as part of the OAS/CIDA First Cooperation Plan with Canada (2009-2011), the project "Integration of Gender Analysis and Gender Equity and Equality as Crosscutting Topics and Objectives in All OAS Programs" was carried out. This was the third phase of the OAS Gender Program. The project's components were:

- Preparation of a study on staff needs for training and awareness-raising about gender and rights;
- Onsite training through gender workshops for personnel from the Department of Human Resources and for potential facilitators; three specialized sessions on the topics of competitiveness, civil registry and electoral observation, and human trafficking; and a workshop for all Inter-American Children's Institute personnel;
- Based on these workshops, the preparation by the CIM – with the support of FLACSO – of the Guide for the Incorporation of Gender Awareness in OAS Policies, Programs, and Projects (2011) and the preparation by the Department of Planning and Evaluation – in collaboration with the CIM – of the Handbook on Mainstreaming Gender Equality into the OAS Project Cycle;

- Online training through the course “Gender Equality and Rights-based Approach to Policies, Programs and Projects,” which was originally offered to OAS staff and later opened to participants from around the region, including representatives of the permanent missions to the OAS;
- The creation of an OAS Gender Community, where the participants in the OAS online course continue to interact – exchanging information, experiences, best practices, and lessons learned – using an online platform hosted by the Educational Portal of the Americas;

In parallel to these processes and with the aim of strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of the efforts to integrate gender in the OAS, a series of 10 indicators were identified and a questionnaire prepared. Since 2010, this has been distributed to all the departments, committees, and other entities of the organization, including its offices in the member states. The answers to the questionnaire are the primary source of information for the annual preparation of the Report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of the IAP. Since 2010, when the baseline was set in accordance with the identified indicators, the successive reports have enabled the measurement and evaluation of the progress made with integrating gender into the different OAS entities.

We have also developed a tool designed to follow up on the Organization’s gender-sensitive mandates and programmed goals, using indicators that show the level to which a gender perspective has been integrated, together with the resources allocated to those mandates and goals. This interactive database offers a unique opportunity to address gender mainstreaming in the OAS on the basis of the organizational mandates, programmed goals, and resources allocated for its implementation.

Wuayuu Indigenous women, Colombia





***Chief of Staff of the Secretary General Hugo De Zela and
Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Emilio Álvarez Icaza***

VII-HUMAN RIGHTS

1- Modernize and Strengthen the System

The forty-fourth special session of the General Assembly took place on March 22, 2013, in Washington, D.C., culminating a process that started almost two years earlier at the San Salvador General Assembly, where the Permanent Council of the Organization was charged with further reflecting “on the workings of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) against the backdrop of the American Convention on Human Rights and its Statute, with a view to strengthening the inter-American human rights system and submitting its recommendations to the member states as soon as possible.”

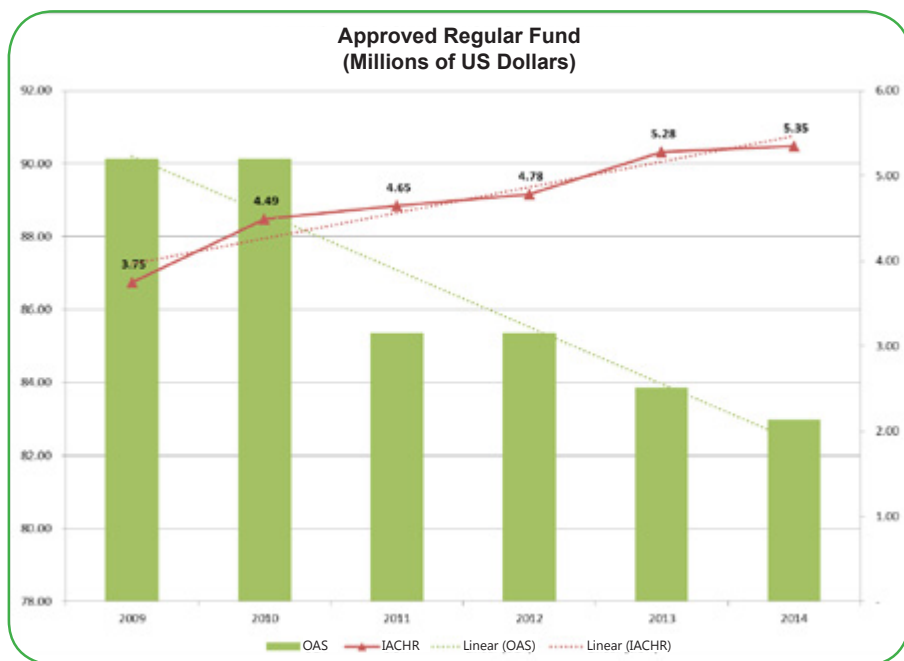
At that meeting, we highlighted the IACHR’s positive response to the concerns raised by the member states and asked to close the debate with effective support for the Commission.

We also underscored that at the meeting there had been consensus regarding our aspiration to attain universal recognition of the system, reflected in the call to all OAS members to accede to the whole set of instruments and bodies that make it up, as well as in the need for the member states, within the framework of respect for their sovereignty and self-determination, to abide by the resolutions made by the system’s bodies. We likewise emphasized the consensus expressed in the meeting regarding strengthening the thematic rapporteurships established by the IACHR to keep better track of matters of importance for the defense of human rights. Finally, we expressed our appreciation for the seriousness with which the subject of how the system is to be financed was incorporated into the discussion and the fact that some member states had put forward proposals in that regard.

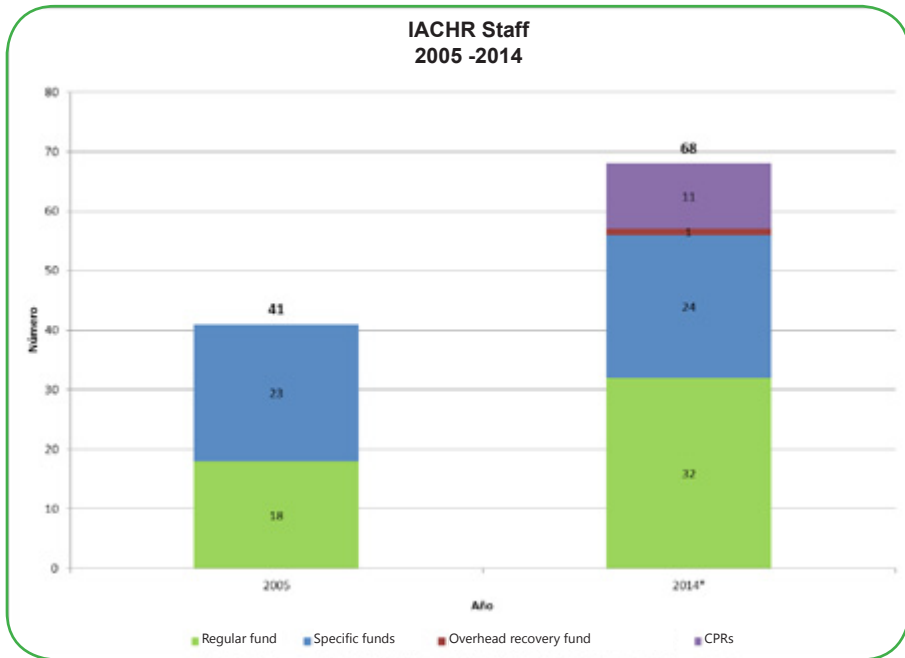
In addition to concluding the special Assembly, which was entirely successful despite the misgivings of the preceding days, those words reflected the importance that we have placed on the Inter-American Commission as a principal organ of the Organization from the beginning of our administration. The results of the special General Assembly represent the culmination of these efforts, with the effective recognition of the Commission’s independence and autonomy, which was one of the principal objectives, in addition to the dissemination of reports and the call for the states to abide by recommendations.

That primary concern was also reflected in the attention given to providing the Commission and the Inter-American Court with adequate financing in order to wholly fulfill their mandates. That is why we proposed annual increases to the Commission’s budget despite the decrease in the real budget of the General Secretariat. The Commission and the IACHR Executive Secretariat were practically the only OAS entities to increase their budgets in recent years. This increase also extended to the funds that the OAS transfers annually to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

From the \$2.9 million that the Commission received in 2005 in order to carry out its activities, the budget increased to \$5.5 million in 2015. Likewise, the budget of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights doubled, increasing from the \$1.4 million it had available in 2005 to more than \$2.7 million in 2015. In total, the General Secretariat’s budgetary support for the inter-American system of human rights increased from the \$4.3 million that the Commission and the Court received in 2005 to the \$8.2 million that they will receive in 2015.



Thanks to these efforts, over the past ten years the Executive Secretariat of the Commission has increased and regularized its staff, the office space at headquarters has been expanded, written proceedings were digitalized, and the funds for holding regular sessions and observational visits were increased.

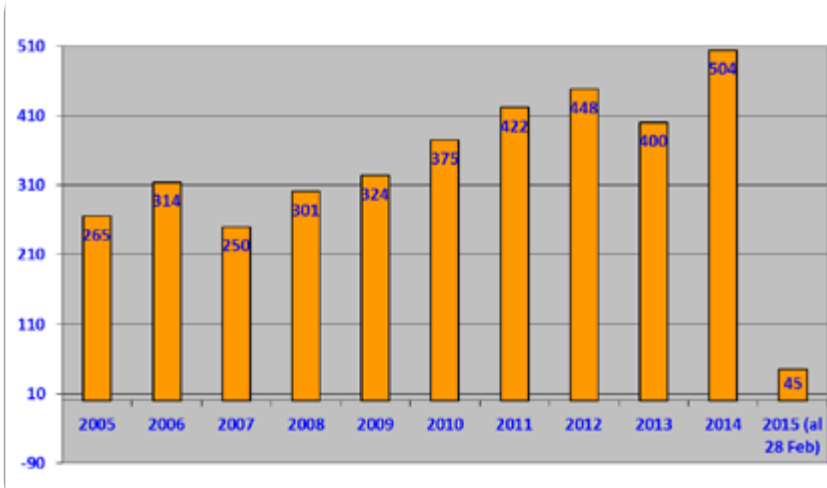


2- Increasingly more Active

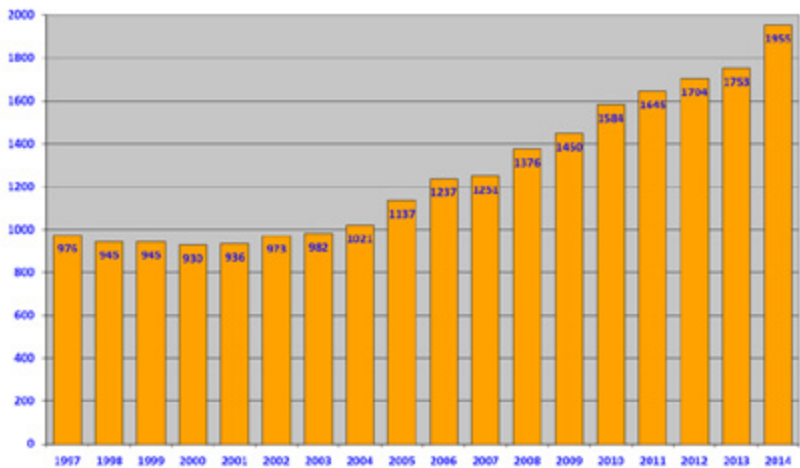
The Commission responded to the General Secretariat’s efforts, and the community of the Americas responded to the Commission by increasing its confidence therein. The number of complaints filed for human rights violations increased from 6,417 in the 1997–2004 period to 14,133 between 2005 and 2014. In the past year alone, five times more complaints were filed than in 1997. Likewise, the number of cases sent by the Commission to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights increased from 54 in the 1997–2004 period to 120 in the 2005–2014 period.

In turn, the number of requests for precautionary measures increased from the 265 received in 2005 to 504 received in 2014. The number of petitions and cases in the admissibility and merits procedural stages has also progressively increased since 2005. The year 2014 ended with a total of 1,955 cases in those stages.

Request for precautionary measures per year



Case docket (admissibility and merits) at the end of every year



During our ten years of management in the General Secretariat, the Executive Secretariat of the Commission strengthened its capacities for fulfilling its mandate and handling the increasing demands in a timely fashion. In order to do so, it took various measures targeted at efficiently responding to the various challenges facing the region. It established work handbooks and legal guidelines for analyzing petitions, cases, and thematic reports.

Moreover, it also created specialized management groups aimed at increasing work efficiency. Among them were a group exclusively dedicated to supporting litigations before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, a Registry Group exclusively responsible for evaluating overdue petitions, and a Protection Group for analyzing requests for precautionary measures. Furthermore, a Press Office was created in 2007 and the Executive Secretariat was completely restructured in 2008 so as to divide up its work by geographical region.

In 2011, the IACHR published its Strategic Plan 2011–2015, which defined the specific goals, results, and indicators in programs and action plans for a five-year period. Through the Plan, the Commission sought to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its operational work. In those same years, there was also a pronounced increase in the work of the thematic rapporteurships and in the promotion and dissemination of activities aimed at supporting the states in fulfilling their international human rights obligations.

Thematic work is one of the three pillars of the Commission's activity. There are nine thematic rapporteurships and one unit to institutionalize, promote, and expand the Commission's work. Their efforts are especially targeted at devoting attention to groups, communities, and persons that are at risk of human rights violations due to their state of vulnerability and the discrimination they have historically faced. Four of these rapporteurships were created between 2005 and 2015: the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Afro-Descendants and against Racial Discrimination, the Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders, the Rapporteurship on the Rights of LGBTI Persons, and the Unit on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

Between 2005 and 2015, the groups that support the rapporteurships prepared more than 40 thematic reports and inter-American legal standards. Furthermore, over the past decade new subjects of interest for the Commission have started to emerge: the rights of the elderly, the rights of individuals who have some type of disability, the right to truth, etc.

The rapporteurships have organized and participated in more than 30 *in loco* working and promotional visits. These visits have covered at least 20 of the Organization's 34 member countries: Haiti, Bolivia, Jamaica, Barbados, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, Honduras, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Mexico, Colombia, Suriname, Canada, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, The Bahamas, the United

States, Uruguay, and Chile, among others. Much of the information collected during the visits is used by the rapporteurships to prepare the thematic reports.

The rapporteurships also provide technical assistance to the member states. For example, between 2005 and 2013, the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Afro-Descendants and against Racial Discrimination advised the working group responsible for negotiating the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Related Forms of Intolerance and the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance. Both conventions were adopted by the OAS General Assembly in June 2013.

In 2008, the Press and Outreach Office began working to spread and promote the human rights system around the continent. Currently, 12,010 subscribers receive the press releases and announcements by e-mail. In 2008, 38 press releases were circulated, and in 2014, 160. The granting of precautionary measures, decisions to present cases to the Inter-American Court, *in loco* visits, and various reports were also made public. The number of visits to the IACHR's website is constantly increasing (1,202,450 visits from October 2014 to March 2015), as is the number of visits to the social networks Facebook (215,000) and Twitter (105,000). The Press and Outreach Office also holds courses for journalists, most recently from November 11 to 13, 2014, at headquarters. More than 40 media workers from around the region attended this course.

3- Pending Issues

Along with unequivocally defending the autonomy of the Court and the Commission, which are the cornerstones of the system's credibility, we must strive to overcome the problems that continue to beset these entities, which not only represent one of the fundamental pillars of the OAS's action, but have also given and continue to give prestige to the OAS in the region and around the world.

The first problem is the excessive delay that continues to affect cases presented to the Commission. This is partially due to the Commission's prestige and its success. Every year more cases are presented from all countries in the region, and it is more difficult to conduct the preliminary examination and admissibility proceedings that make it possible to bring cases before the Commission.

The main issue is the lack of resources, and, although the Secretariat does as much as possible by increasing the number of interns, creating accelerated

proceedings, and seeking additional volunteer resources, delays continue to be the most significant Achilles's heel of the IACHR.

The second problem is attaining universal recognition of the system. This problem concerns the Court, not the Commission. Indeed, the Commission is in the Charter of the OAS, and merely due to the fact that they are members, all of the states of the Americas are subject to it. However, the same does not hold for the Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San José) nor, within it, for the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. As long as there continue to be countries that have not signed or ratified the Convention or have not recognized the Court's jurisdiction, the system will remain incomplete and unbalanced.

The third problem is the governments' compliance with decisions made by the Commission and the Court. In this regard, the situation differs from state to state. What is important is that the measures issued by the Commission, particularly the precautionary measures, and the sentences handed down by the Court, be accepted. This acceptance will likely increase as more members ratify the Convention.

The protection of human rights is first on the list of the essential elements of democracy identified in Article 3 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. The effective exercise of human rights is one of the pillars of democratic governance and is a fundamental expression of the validity of the rule of law itself. We therefore closed the forty-fourth special session of the General Assembly by insisting on a call to preserve the autonomy of the inter-American human rights system. I ended my remarks by stating, *"The citizens of the Americas who resort to the Commission and the Court do so in the conviction that they are contacting institutions that will hear their cases freely and without coercion. The virtue of the system, that our democracies need to strengthen, lies precisely in an apparent contradiction: the system is created and maintained by the states of the Americas to promote human rights and to defend them, even against possible violations committed by those very same states. But that contradiction is only apparent. It reflects the commitments our governments undertook on behalf of our peoples in the first article of our Inter-American Democratic Charter: 'The peoples of America have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it.' No other organization better reflects that commitment than our inter-American human rights system."*



Ethanol production plant, Honduras

VIII- INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT

1- Regional and Inter-Agency Dialogue

The cornerstone of integral development has certain features that make it particularly complex to deal with within the OAS as it depends of an Inter-American Council for Integral Development, which covers a greater number of topics: economic, social, environmental, immigration, etc. On the other hand, it is probably the one with the largest number of issues in common with other institutions, and development banks (IDB, World Bank, Development Bank of Latin America -CAF and regional banks in Central America and the Caribbean) as with institutions within the system itself, they were created to address health (PAHO) and agriculture (IICA). Several of these institutions have more resources to promote development and were created specifically for this. But despite its financial limitations and the breadth of its mandate, is the OAS Secretariat which pays more attention to many of the member states, especially younger and more vulnerable countries looking for analysis and cooperation to be able to address their problems of sustainable development.

That is why, in this area, the dialogue at all levels to which we referred in the first chapter, is what allows the OAS to play a regulatory role in development issues and in the coordination not only with the countries, but also with other members of the system.

The OAS is the only inter-American organization that has an “all-of-government” approach. It is part of its reason for being and constitutes a unique asset that is not duplicated in any other regional organization in the Americas. While the OAS is not a development agency, its position as a hub where all points meet gives it a decided advantage in the promotion, formulation, and implementation of more integrated development agendas.

That recognition supported the growth in the number of ministerial meetings over the last decade. The Executive Secretariat for Integral Development alone coordinates about a dozen meetings of Ministers and High-Level Authorities. Ministerial processes underscore the OAS’ singular value and bolster what is perhaps the most consultative and holistic approach to policy formulation and decision-making at the hemispheric level.



OAS Assistant Secretary General, Albert Ramdin

These spaces for dialogue have strengthened partnerships for cooperation, have been instrumental in informing the Organization's approach to particular issues, and have contributed to major policy reforms at the national and industry action at both the national and regional levels.

Some examples: as a direct result of mandates from the XVIII meeting of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor in Medellin in 2013, the 50th anniversary of meetings of labor authorities, several initiatives have taken root, including a set of recommendations to address informality (perhaps the most pressing challenge for labor markets in the region) was produced jointly by delegates from Ministries of Labor. A study underway on social security agreements will provide alternatives to design a hemispheric mechanism to facilitate recognition of pension contributions. Similarly, a singular focus on sustainable tourism over a period of four years was key to the creation of a public-private partnership to underwrite a sustainable destinations alliance initiative with industry leaders, communities, tourism ministries, sub-regional organizations, and the OAS working together.

A new – and perhaps overdue – feature of OAS ministerial meetings has been the push in the last two years to organize inter-sectorial dialogue within the framework of ministerial meetings. These include inter-sectorial dialogues between Ministers of Labor and Ministers of Education, to address issues of education and

workforce development; between ministries of social development and ministries of labor, to find common ground on issues of social protection and employment; and between ministries of social development and of women's affairs, on gender mainstreaming and equal opportunity.

The response to these initiatives – a series of firsts – has been universally positive and further highlights the essential policy niche occupied by the OAS, and the ability of those processes managed by the OAS to help transform policy into concrete action for development.

With dialogue it became possible to find the best niches of work for the vast field of development. They were found in social inclusion, competitiveness, sustainable development and education. Those are the issue in which the Secretariat works because we believe in them we can make a difference; this does not mean that dialogue as a central task of the OAS, does not continue in larger spaces and covering more topics, depending on the regulatory approach we have taken.

2- Social Inclusion

Today, more than ever, equality and social inclusion are among the central objectives of public policy in the region. After decades of progress in social investment, economic growth, and poverty eradication, the Americas continue to have the highest inequality in the world. In recent years we have understood inequality not only in terms of unequal distribution of income and wealth, but also in terms of opportunity gaps throughout a person's life and gaps in access to and the quality of goods and services. What is more, the phenomenon of exclusion is also getting worse, first of all among sectors of the population that have historically been excluded due to factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or social origin, and second due to differences which result from unequal access to opportunities, resources, and capacities in our societies and which place many at a disadvantage or simply incapable of claiming their economic, social, and cultural rights. We have worked to address this regional challenge from that perspective, understanding that it is a multidimensional phenomenon.

The OAS-UNDP report titled "Our Democracy in Latin America"—produced in 2010 at the OAS as a contribution to the regional debate on democratic governance and development—lays out a vision of economic development and social inclusion as a purpose of democracy, giving priority to the interdependent relationship between the political and the economic. In other words, priority is placed on the need to ensure the political viability of economic programs that

enable the exercise of economic, social, and cultural rights but also the economic viability of democracy. This interdependence is also suggested in inter-American regulatory frameworks.

Combating inequality and social exclusion requires effective public policies, solid institutions, and legal frameworks that make it possible to break down structural barriers in access to opportunities, increase social protection coverage, raise the living standards of different groups in the most vulnerable circumstances, and promote decent, fair employment conditions. In this context, during the 10 years of this administration we also contributed to greater democratic governance by supporting the member states in their efforts to generate more development with equity, greater social inclusion, and the full observance of economic, social, and cultural rights for the people of the region.

After 10 years of effort, the region today has new instruments that enable it to better advance in consolidating democratic institutions from the standpoint of generating opportunities, access, and the full observance of rights in the countries of the Hemisphere. During this period, the Protocol of San Salvador—a critical instrument in the inter-American legal framework and one with an extremely rich practical application—was envisaged as an essential instrument for the region to promote the attainment of citizens’ economic, social, and cultural rights, as a complement to the progress made with respect to civil and political rights. Two sets of indicators were approved to measure compliance with these rights by the states parties, and consensus was achieved on the importance of this instrument for improving the quality of public policies on issues related to health, labor, social security, food, and the right to a healthy environment and to education, among a number of other essential rights. Given the regional political consensus regarding development with equity, the approval of Progress Indicators related to compliance with the Protocol of San Salvador is of enormous strategic importance and has great potential in terms of applicability. It marks an important step taken in this period toward the full observance of the economic, social, and cultural rights of our citizens.

In the past seven years, the OAS has also strengthened a range of mechanisms to promote the inclusion of people who are in vulnerable circumstances. It worked to consolidate a mechanism for implementing and following up on the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities and the Program of Action for the Decade, as well as a series of initiatives geared toward the political inclusion of persons with disabilities and an improved situation for these persons in Haiti. Similarly, for several years we have been supporting the process to draft a Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons, and have made substantial progress so far in negotiating it.

Labor, employment, and social protection have also been aspects on which the Organization has focused its efforts in the last 10 years. During this period we have witnessed firsthand the evolution of labor markets in the region and have helped to reinforce labor and employment policies and provided significant impetus to the strengthening of labor administrations through the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor. This forum, which represents the first ministerial meeting of the OAS and which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2013, brings together labor authorities from throughout the Americas, along with representatives of the trade union and business sectors, to analyze and identify the most pressing challenges in the world of labor, define joint actions, and help consolidate at the national level policies promoted through regional agreements. Along with these efforts at the ministerial level, beginning in 2005 the OAS set in motion an initiative designed specifically to strengthen ministries' human and institutional capacities: the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL). This is a mechanism for cooperation and technical assistance made up of the ministries of labor themselves and recognized as an example of south-south and triangular cooperation. This year it celebrates its tenth anniversary.

Over the last decade, the subject of inclusion has evolved in several directions, and the OAS has responded to that trend. First, we made certain that the observance of civil and political rights had been strengthened. In addition, we have worked to reduce poverty and extreme poverty, which to a large extent has been achieved. However, the levels of inequality and perceived inequality persist. Recent reports point to people's negative perceptions about the fairness of distribution in their countries: In 2011, 79 percent of the region's population reported thinking that income distribution in their country was "unfair or very unfair."

Following is an overview of the major contributions the OAS has made in the area of social inclusion, which have laid the groundwork for the strengthening of institutions and the viability of democracy in the region.

- The Social Charter of the Americas, adopted in 2012, is without a doubt one of the most important social documents in the Hemisphere. It represents a historic opportunity to position overall well-being and equity as central public policy goals of the Organization's member states. The Plan of Action, adopted in 2015, is driving significant progress in this area, setting "goals and strategic lines of action in the areas of labor, social protection, health, food and nutrition, education, housing and basic public services, and culture..." (Paragraph 1 of the Plan of Action). The Social Charter and its Plan of Action are a natural complement to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, making

it possible to shape public policies and guide the member states as they move toward development with equity and the full observance of economic, social, and cultural rights.

- Beginning in 2014, with the presentation of progress reports, the states parties to the Protocol of San Salvador have begun a process of monitoring and evaluating compliance with social rights, which will also enable them to evaluate their public policies on an ongoing basis.
- In 2007, the OAS set up the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (CEDDIS, for its Spanish acronym). In the context of the CEDDIS agenda, the OAS produced the first Hemisphere-wide report on the exercise of legal capacity by persons with disabilities (2013), which promoted the creation of the first instruction manual on supports and safeguards.
- In partnership with PAHO, the OAS created the Network for Consumer Safety and Health as a forum for cooperation among consumer-protection, health, and metrology authorities, along with other authorities with competence in these matters. This network has been consolidated as an inter-American mechanism to safeguard product safety across the Hemisphere.
- The Continuous Reporting System on International Migration in the Americas (SICREMI) emerged in 2009 as the General Secretariat's response to the demand from OAS member countries to have updated and continuous information on the growing phenomenon of migration in the region. The project was developed in conjunction with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The report "International Migration in the Americas" is unique in the Hemisphere for its coverage and content and the degree to which its information is current.
- The aforementioned Inter-American Network for Labor Administration, created in 2005, has shown excellent results, in its 10 years of operation, with regard to the institutional strengthening of ministries of labor. This activity has included the design and improvement of programs, greater efficiency of internal procedures, and the reform of regulatory or legislative frameworks.



OAS Social Inclusion Programs

- After the Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Social Development in 2008, the countries of the region supported the Bridge Program as a model program to provide horizontal cooperation in the area of social protection between Chile and seven Caribbean countries. Then, by mandate of the Summit of the Americas (2009), the Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN) was created. It has promoted a true marketplace of innovation and practical knowledge, combining needs, specialized knowledge, and an innovative methodology for cooperation on social protection, including exchanges, workshops, a virtual community of practice, and a series of Inter-American Social Protection Dialogues. It has also provided significant support to strengthen the public sector's capacity in social protection, through Diploma Courses in Social Protection and Participatory Gender Assessments (PGA) for Social Development Ministries.

3- The Social Charter of the Americas and Anti-Discrimination Conventions

The strengthening of dialogue within the Organization during our administration led the OAS to adopt the Social Charter of the Americas in 2012 and to call for the development of a Plan of Action, which was adopted in 2015. The Social Charter of the Americas stands to become—along with the Inter-American Democratic Charter, to which it is a natural complement—a fundamental pillar for the fulfillment of the Organization’s purposes, since the OAS Charter itself establishes that one of the essential purposes of the OAS is to eradicate extreme poverty, which it considers an obstacle to the full democratic development of the peoples of the Hemisphere. For its part, the Inter-American Democratic Charter states that poverty, illiteracy, and low levels of human development are factors that adversely affect the consolidation of democracy. It also establishes that democracy is essential for the social, political, and economic development of the peoples of the Americas.

The Social Charter is, without a doubt, one of the most important social documents in the Hemisphere, and it represents a historic opportunity to position overall well-being and equity as central public policy objectives of the OAS member states. The Social Charter and its Plan of Action are geared toward ensuring that states can achieve societies that offer all citizens more opportunities to benefit from sustainable development with equity and social inclusion. It includes the principles of social development and establishes goals and specific objectives to strengthen the Organization’s existing mechanisms related to democracy, integral development, and the fight against poverty.

Political dialogue also led to the development of new conventions and resolutions that made a decisive contribution to the expansion of democracy. In 2013, the OAS adopted two important conventions in the area of human rights, discrimination, and intolerance: the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance, and the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Related Forms of Intolerance. Both were adopted in the framework of the forty-third regular session of the General Assembly. The adoption of these conventions ended a long process that formally began in 2005. These conventions undoubtedly will serve as a necessary reference point for any future actions that may be undertaken in the Hemisphere involving the protection

and promotion of the human rights of any minority or vulnerable sector to which the conventions refer. While General Assembly resolutions have established and will continue to establish international standards concerning specific minority or vulnerable groups, up until now—with the exception of women and persons with disabilities—no such group had had a convention that referred exclusively to them.

4- Tripling the Number of Scholarships

More than 44,000 young people have been able to pursue higher education at world-class universities: OAS scholarship programs.

In 2005, the OAS executed US\$8.3 million under its Scholarships and Training Program based strictly on the use of funding from member state quotas. By 2014, under the leadership of Secretary General Insulza and thanks largely to its partnership drive, the OAS Scholarship Program was valued at US\$115 million. This includes contributions of member states, government agencies, the OAS Consortium of Universities (with a reach of nearly 1,700 universities), the private sector, and other partners worldwide. The scholarship and training offerings also became more diverse – to include academic degrees, vocational training, and online training. Student education loans continued to be made available through the Leo Rowe Fund.

OAS Scholarships Awarded 2005-2014			
	Number of Scholarships Awarded 2005	Number of Scholarships Awarded (Cumulative 2006-2014)	Number of Scholarships Awarded 2005-2014
Degree driven scholarships and loans	94 (scholarships) 79 (loans)	4,710 (scholarships) 915 (loans)	4,804 994
Non-degree driven scholarships	3,253	25,410	28,663
TOTAL	3,426	31,035	34,461



OAS Executive Secretary for Integral Development, Sherry Tross and OAS Secretary for External Relations, Alfonso Quiñonez

The OAS Scholarships Program now comprises four subprograms that strategically meet the different education and training demands of our region – OAS Academic Scholarships Program, OAS Professional Development Program, Partnerships Program for Education and Training (PAEC), and OAS Scholarships Program for Haiti. The Leo S. Rowe Pan American Fund is an interest-free OAS loan program that works in conjunction with the OAS Scholarships Program to increase access to education.

In the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and in response to an emergency call for assistance from that country, the OAS successfully launched the OAS Emergency Scholarship Program for Haiti with US\$500,000 in funding from the Capital Fund. Through this scholarship program, online programs are offered to Haitians living in Haiti to pursue master's degrees as well as professional development training. Through 2015, over 800 scholarships had been awarded to Haitian students.

One main barrier for students is the issue of language and foreign language acquisition. To overcome this barrier, the OAS has put in place mechanisms to ensure that students who pursue degrees in a foreign language have support for acquiring this second language.

More than just the granting of scholarships, OAS education programs and the networks that have been built have strengthened the OAS' capacity to serve as a bridge between the Caribbean and Latin America. More Caribbean nationals are taking advantage of scholarship programs for study in Latin America and the OAS has promoted closer contact between higher education institutions of both regions. In 2010, the OAS joined efforts with the UNESCO International Institute of Higher Education and launched the first Caribbean Conference on Higher Education to promote cooperation between the Caribbean and Latin America in higher education.

5- Toward a Regional Education System

More than a half million individuals have benefited under OAS educational programs. The OAS brand in education and human capacity-building, developed over 60 years, is a powerful asset that attracts partnerships, raises confidence levels among all constituents, and has national and hemispheric resonance. This seal of educational trust given by the member states continues to strengthen as the OAS provides technical advice to ministries of education, higher education councils, national scholarships offices, educational financial aid institutions, teacher training colleges, and National Councils of Science and Research.

With the goal of contributing to teacher education, the Inter-American Teacher Education Network (ITEN) was created in 2012. In the space of two years, it grew into an active, virtual community of practice with a membership of nearly 20,000 teachers, including some from outside the Americas region. Through this network, teachers have access to free online courses, workshops, webinars, and virtual toolkits for the promotion of innovative pedagogies. Between September and December of 2014, ITEN organized 12 horizontal cooperation missions among 16 OAS member states, in which ministries of education and experts in the region exchanged knowledge and experiences on teacher policies. The Inter-American Collaboratory on the Teaching Profession, a complementary mechanism, also supported education policy and technical cooperation missions between ministries of education.

This combined experience in education policy, teacher training, and student support has positioned us as a unique platform for multilateral educational partnerships in the region. As an example, the Partnership Program for Education and Training (PAEC) was created in 2010, with a seed fund (US\$250,000), to develop partnerships. Using this leverage, the OAS tripled the number of higher education institutions in the OAS Consortium of Universities. The OAS Consortium of Universities is now comprised of universities from 18 countries. The reach of the OAS Consortium of Universities has been expanded from individual higher education institutions to university networks worldwide, taking collaboration to an unprecedented level and giving the OAS access to more than 1,700 academic institutions, including UDUAL (Union of Latin American and Caribbean Universities), CGUB (Coimbra Group of Brazilian Universities), ASCUN (Colombian Association of Universities), UNICA (Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe), and AUF (Francophone Universities Agency), among others.

Of particular note has been the growth of partnerships with member and observer states to support development cooperation in the area of education. Chief among these have been partnerships with: the Coimbra Group of Brazilian Universities which have yielded 939 academic scholarships over the past 3 years; the National Council of Science and Technology of Mexico (CONACYT) which has awarded a total of 392 scholarships for master's and doctoral studies in the areas of science and technology; the Free University of Brussels (VUB) to provide 60 doctoral degree and 40 master's scholarships to be provided over the next five years; and the University of Manchester, which now offers full doctoral degree scholarships specifically for the Caribbean.

Following the mandates issued by education ministerials, the OAS human development initiatives together helped to improve the overall regional quality of education in the areas of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) in Education, Teacher Training, Education and Democracy, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Education. In the last ten years, these programs have reached more than half a million people in all member states.

OAS Department of Human Development and Education (DHDE) Number of People Benefitting from our Non-Scholarship Programs 2005-2014	
Educational Portal of The Americas Network	180.000
Virtual Educa Regional Events (Panama, Colombia, Peru)	261.000
Virtual Educa Caribbean (Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago)	29.000
Inter-American Teacher Education Network (ITEN)	58.000
Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices	9.000
EducaSTEM	600
Educational Opportunities Workshops	3.500
Educational Conferences (Higher Education, Mobile Technologies, EDUCATON-Citizenship and ICTs in Education)	11.000
TOTAL	552.100

The OAS has devised different strategies, according to member state needs, eschewing the “one-size-fits-all” approach. In an effort to ensure no one is left behind, many programs have established a designated number of scholarships for participants from smaller-sized member states in the Central America and Caribbean regions, as well as for member states with a relatively low human development index. This gives learners of any age a first chance to benefit from access to quality education, either at no cost or at a cost that they can afford.

Additionally, the OAS started a program for Growing Higher Education Institutions in Central America, where university faculty and academic and research deans will be exposed to inquiry-based methodologies on how to include research for development activities throughout the university curriculum. This is a cooperation effort developed with higher education institutions from Brazil, Mexico, Belgium, and Puerto Rico. The efforts are meant to strengthen local capacities with a regional and global vision. Similarly, the OAS has recently brought together Brazilian, Latin American, and United States universities to learn about university internationalization practices and strategies from South Africa, Europe, and South Korea.

OAS efforts to promote innovation in education, including through collaboration with Virtual Educa, gained in visibility and popularity over the last four years. Virtual Educa, which partners with governments and private companies, now regularly brings together over 10,000 policymakers, government officials, educators and students to increase awareness and skills development in the use of information and communication technologies in education, as well as provide massive teacher training to the beneficiary host countries. These efforts have supported member state calls for the promotion of the teaching of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) at the primary and secondary levels, through the use of modern pedagogies; the use of information and communication technologies in the teaching and learning process, as articulated in the final resolution of the 2015 meeting of ministers of education.

6- Competitiveness is Crucial

Since 2009, our Secretariat, through its Secretariat for Integral Development, has served as Technical Secretariat to the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC), a mechanism established under the Americas Competitiveness Forum (ACF) as a hemispheric forum for high-level competitiveness authorities and key stakeholders to engage in policy dialogue, exchange experiences, and pursue joint projects. Through the RIAC mechanism, the OAS has provided ongoing and tailor-made support to competitiveness-driven cooperation initiatives among governments and stakeholders, converting policy decisions and commitments into concrete action.

The RIAC includes competitiveness authorities, public and private competitiveness councils from 34 OAS member states working in collaboration with more than 10 international organizations, including the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA); and more than 15 specialized institutions, universities, and think tanks from across the region and beyond.

Based on the conceptual framework of ten general competitiveness principles, known as the Consensus of Santo Domingo agreed to in 2011, OAS member states have shared over 150 experiences related to competitiveness with concrete offers of cooperation over the past three years. Several initiatives and products have been developed under RIAC to promote the dissemination of these experiences, deepen cooperation opportunities and achieve results:

- The Signs of Competitiveness in the Americas Report an annual publication which has become the main reference on competitiveness for policymakers and other stakeholders in the region, providing an overview of the region's competitiveness and innovation landscape as well as the experiences on competitiveness from OAS member states and institutional partners.
- The Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ACE) organizes high-level visits of decision-makers to advanced technology centers and innovation hubs, for the purpose of boosting public-private partnerships and investments, and strengthening complementary innovation capacities.



Carmen Lucia de la Pava, Chief of Staff of the Assistant Secretary General, David Choquehuanca, Bolivia Chancellor, Albert Ramdín Assistant Secretary General

- The Working Group of Experts on Subnational Competitiveness (GTECS) defines strategies that guide the work of the subregions, organizes workshops, provides technical cooperation, and offers subnational competitiveness authorities support to implement their agendas.

One particular initiative pursued in this area, during the current Secretary General's administration, pertained to tourism. The Small Tourism Enterprises Network (STEN) was introduced in 2010 to establish a unified network of public, private and community partners to provide strategic support to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the tourism sector. An important result was the creation of the Inter-American Network of Owners and Operators of Small Hotels at a sectorial meeting in Costa Rica in 2013. The STEN has been successful in establishing closer links among small hotel associations across the various subregions of the Americas and, in so doing, is helping small hotel growth and competitiveness.

7- Climate Change, Energy, and the Environment

Article 15 of the OAS Inter-American Democratic Charter (IADC) asserts that the exercise of democracy promotes the preservation and good stewardship of the environment and that it is essential for states of the Hemisphere to implement policies and strategies to protect the environment including application of various treaties and conventions to achieve sustainable development for the benefit of future generations. Member states of the OAS have long recognized that sustainable development requires an integral approach involving economic, social, and environmental elements to support human development, reduce poverty, and promote equality, equity, and social inclusion. OAS member states have been at the forefront of the promotion of sound governance principles, including through such hemispheric instruments as the OAS Charter (which pioneered the use of the term “Integral Development”), the IADC, the Social Charter, and the Inter-American Program for the Sustainable Development (PIDS).

The work of the OAS over the past decade has been positively impacted by a number of seminal, global and hemispheric events that have helped to inform, sharpen, and strengthen the policy and strategic programming focus of the Organization’s work. The outcomes of the first Rio Conference has had the strongest and most enduring influence of all, as reflected the Declaration of Santa Cruz which was adopted at the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development, held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in 1996, and its Plan of Action; in the Declaration of Santa Cruz+10; in the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (2006-2009-2014); and in the Declaration of Santo Domingo for Sustainable Development in the Americas, adopted in the Dominican Republic in 2010. This Declaration established the importance of encouraging dialogue and regional cooperation as well as public-private partnerships, *inter alia*, in order to consolidate existing hemispheric mechanisms for the promotion and strengthening of policies, legislation, institutional transparency, and other mechanisms that foster equity, equal rights and opportunities, social inclusion, public participation, and sound public administration.

Sustainable Growth and Resilience

Shared environmental threats and local challenges that extend beyond member state borders have created an interdependence among countries that

has resulted in both new challenges and opportunities for the region. The threat-opportunity nexus has elevated the level of engagement of OAS programs in energy, water resource management, sustainable cities and risk mitigation – and underscored the need for broad-based partnership, including at the community level.

One such example is the Sustainable Communities initiative in Central America and the Caribbean. Ten countries from those regions have benefited from the Sustainable Communities initiative that provided seed funding and technical advice to support the capacities of local communities to develop innovative solutions to challenges resulting from urbanization. These projects are helping to improve access to basic socioeconomic infrastructure; promote recycling and reduce waste; increase resilience to natural disasters; promote green jobs; and strengthen the cross-sectoral integration of investments in urban areas through improved participatory planning and monitoring at local, municipal and state levels.

Water security has also emerged as a major issue of concern globally and in the Americas. Watershed management projects undertaken by the General Secretariat have helped countries to address the threats that climate variability and climate change may pose to those who depend on river basins for their livelihoods. These programs were particularly useful in the Chaco, La Plata, and Rio Bravo river basins where participating governments now find themselves in a better position to coordinate actions and investments to achieve sustainable utilization of water resources, and initiate the process of adapting to climate variability and climate change. OAS programs have also been instrumental in increasing the recognition and understanding of trans-boundary groundwater resources, and foster collaboration among the countries sharing the same aquifer, to achieve consensus on legal, institutional, socio-economic, scientific, and environmental aspects.

The launch of the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA) at the 2009 Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago gave new impetus the General Secretariat's energy projects. Those efforts have demonstrated that energy security can be effectively addressed only through sustainability, integration, market transformation, and diversification. Strategies in this regard, have included developing reliable energy diversification approaches at the national and regional levels; advancing the integration of sustainable energy policies into public, private, and community sector strategies; and developing and implementing energy efficiency standards for industries, buildings, appliances, and vehicles, and their inclusion in energy policy and legislation. Specific outcomes include:

- The building of a functioning ethanol plant in Honduras and the start of a similar project in Guatemala, both of which will significantly reduce those countries' energy import bills, decrease carbon emissions, and improve energy security;
- The drafting of geothermal resource legislation in Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines; the preparation of national energy policies and sustainable energy action plans in six Caribbean countries; support for the development of wind farms on two islands; technical support for solar energy use in three countries; and completion of feasibility studies on bio-fuels resources assessments in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti and St. Kitts and Nevis under the US-Brazil Biofuels Partnership;
- Implementation of a pilot project in Ecuador, which resulted in the creation and approval of a national closed-loop production cycle (zero waste) program; the certification of the first Cradle-to-Cradle Certified Packaged Product in Latin America and the Caribbean; and the establishment of a new Cleaner Production Center for Ecuador. This intervention set the foundation for an expanded program, now underway in Colombia, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago; and
- Assistance for member states to build their governance frameworks for sustainability and environmental protection, and provide policy support and advice on trade, investment, and sustainable development issues through the Pathways for Prosperity in the Americas initiative, the cooperation agenda agreed to under the Central America – Dominican Republic and United States Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) and other initiatives.

Building Capacity and Strengthening Institutions for Sustainable Development and Environment Management

The interdependence among countries, resulting from shared environmental threats as well as from local challenges that have negative implications beyond borders, has presented new challenges and opportunities for the region. State sovereignty has been expressed through regional cooperation within the context of regional institutions, such as the OAS.

Despite the lead role taken by the Western Hemisphere in the adoption of environmental laws, serious concerns over governance hamper their effective implementation. Some of these concerns relate to the absence of a coordinated approach to the implementation of international commitments at the national and local levels. In large measure, this shortcoming can be explained by the

lack of a systemic assessment of compliance possibilities, stakeholder roles, and institutional needs for implementation.

In this context, we have helped member states to build their governance frameworks for sustainability and environmental protection. Here, efforts focused on the interconnection of trade, investment, and sustainable development, including through the Pathways for Prosperity in the Americas initiative and the cooperation agenda agreed under the Central America – Dominican Republic and United States Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA). The OAS provided CAFTA-DR countries technical assistance to meet their long-term environmental goals in the context of an environmental cooperation agenda with a project portfolio of approximately \$85 million.

Through the use of cross-cutting approaches, such as the Inter-American Strategy for Public Participation in Sustainable Development Decision-Making (ISP), access to justice, legal enforcement, and dispute resolution, the OAS has been supporting the integration of environment and sustainable development issues in decision-making in a manner that engages all stakeholders. Two of the ISP's 7 principles with strong relevance in the context of access rights are: (i) the principle of access which recognizes that in order to participate effectively, citizens should have timely access to the different levels of government, to information, to the political process, and to the judicial system; and (ii) the principle of transparency which acknowledges that for partnerships between civil society and the government to be effective, trust and transparency are required, as they help ensure that motivations and objectives are explicit and that reliable information is made available in a timely manner. Member states in Central America and the Dominican Republic have identified more than 200 provisions in their legal frameworks regarding access to environmental information in areas such as environmental impact evaluation, toxic substances and waste, the establishment of protected areas, and climate change, among others.

Acting through its four thematic networks – on Water Resources, Biodiversity, Risk Management, and Environmental Law – the OAS sought to boost capacity for environmental compliance, through the exchange of information and experiences. More than 400 experts on environmental law and policy from the Americas and beyond participate in and support OAS activities. To date, the OAS has cooperation agreements with more than 50 institutions to support the implementation of international agreements. Significant accomplishments over the past decade included the establishment of an Inter-American Judicial Capacity-Building Program on the Environmental Rule of Law. As part of these efforts, more than 15 judges and prosecutors from the region participated in a symposium held within the first United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), resulting in key messages for promoting the environmental rule of law.

The OAS conducted various capacity-building activities in trade and environment. An online training course has also been developed on trade and environment as well as an on-site edition jointly with American University, benefiting over 120 government officials from the region over the past four years. In addition, the DSD continued to work with several UN-system agencies as well as the secretariat for MEAs, such as CITES, the UNFCCC, the CDB and RAMSAR conventions. Its collaboration with UNEP in matters relating to law, justice, and governance for environmental sustainability is noteworthy as UNEP has given full recognition to the institutional sovereignty of the OAS in every joint activity under this program.

Sustainable Cities

With support from the Government of the United States, through the Sustainable Communities in Central America and the Caribbean project¹, the OAS provided grants for 14 innovative, community-level sustainable development projects in Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago to implement demonstration projects in clean energy and energy efficiency, resilience to natural hazards, sustainable transport, waste management and water resources management. These projects aim at: (i) improving access by the poor to basic socioeconomic infrastructure; (ii) promoting recycling of e-waste and encouraging improved wastewater management; (iii) increasing resilience to natural disasters; (iv) promoting energy-efficient, community-based activities and green jobs; and (v) strengthening the cross-sectoral integration of investments in urban areas through improved participatory planning and monitoring at local, municipal and State levels.

Natural Hazards Risk Management and Climate Change

An important accomplishment in this area was the endorsement by the OAS General Assembly, in June 2012, of the "Inter-American Plan for Disaster Prevention and Response and the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance." In addition, the OAS supported the review and strengthening of legal and institutional frameworks for delivering humanitarian assistance, facilitating the timely deployment of humanitarian assistance teams, and the distribution of relief supplies. Focus was also centered on community-based Early Warning Systems (EWS) and increasing local community resilience. The OAS continued to support the implementation of the Regional Platform of the United Nations International

1 <http://www.ecpamericas.org/initiatives/default.aspx?id=65>

Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA,) and the implementation of the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR) and its Inter-American Strategic Plan (IASP) for Policies on Risk Reduction, Risk Management, and Disaster Response and promotes inter-agency coordination for its implementation. Working in collaboration with the Executive Secretariat of the CIM, the OAS drafted a policy paper on gender-oriented women rights protection, during and in the aftermath of complex emergencies. A policy paper on Child Rights in Disaster Risk Management was prepared in collaboration with the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN).

The OAS continued to support implementation of the CARICOM Regional Strategy on Climate Change and Sustainable Development under a cooperation agreement signed with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) in April 2008. We also supported the CARICOM member states' preparations for effective participation in Conferences of the Parties to the UNFCCC. In late 2013, we began implementing the project entitled "Renewable Energy and Climate Science Metrology and Technology Challenges in the Americas Initiative."

The OAS has been conducting country needs assessments to enhance national DRM Systems and improve hemispheric coordination and cooperation in three selected sub-regions of the Americas: (i) the Central American Isthmus and the Dominican Republic; (ii) the Caribbean Community (CARICOM); and (iii) (CAPRADE). Through the OAS-White Helmet Program (OAS-WHP), the Organization helped several member states to develop their national volunteer networks and systems. The OAS continues to be integrally involved in implementing a cooperation agreement signed in 1997 between the GS/OAS and the Inter-Agency Secretariat for the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, through its Regional Unit for the Americas.

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Promotion

Our efforts in this area have sought to demonstrate that energy security can be effectively addressed only through sustainability, integration, market transformation, and diversification. Strategies in this regard have included developing reliable energy diversification approaches at the national and regional levels; advancing the integration of sustainable energy policies into public, private, and community sector strategies; and developing and implementing energy efficiency standards for industries, buildings, appliances, and vehicles, and their inclusion in energy policy and legislation. More specifically, the OAS assisted with the drafting of geothermal resource legislation in Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and in the preparation of national energy policies and sustainable energy action plans in Antigua and

Barbuda, the Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Assistance was provided to the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis with the drafting of a Power Purchase Agreement for its first 1.1 MW wind farm on Nevis and an 8 MW wind farm on St. Kitts. Solar photovoltaic projects were implemented in Antigua and Barbuda, the Dominican Republic, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and prefeasibility studies and bio-fuels resources assessments were conducted in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, and St. Kitts and Nevis. Under the US-Brazil Biofuels Partnership, the OAS supported the development of ethanol facilities in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. The first of these plants was set up in Honduras in August 2014.

The OAS continued its execution of 6 renewable energy pilot projects in the Caribbean, facilitated investigations and expert exchanges in bio-fuels involving the United States, Brazil, and Colombia, and contributed to the production and distribution of 500 clean cook stoves in Central America. Through the activities of the ECPA Energy Efficiency Working Group, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Honduras received technical assistance to identify recommendations for the development and implementation of concrete actions to promote energy efficiency.

Since 2009, our Organization, in its capacity as ECPA Clearinghouse, organized over 30 meetings, workshops, forums and other gatherings and built several tools to sustain dialogue and technical cooperation among key stakeholders. Under the ECPA Sustainable Energy Capacity Building Initiative (SECBI), the OAS is helping Caribbean to overcome the commercialization challenges related to the expanded use of sustainable energy alternatives. Between 2011 and 2013, DSD supported the implementation of a pilot project in Ecuador that resulted in: (1) the creation and approval of a National CLCP Program; (2) the certification of the first Cradle-to-Cradle Certified Packaged Product in Latin America and the Caribbean; (3) the establishment of a new Cleaner Production Center for Ecuador; and (4) the inclusion of dedicated chapter/text in the National Development Plan "Plan para el Buen Vivir 2013-2017" to further the implementation of the CLCP Program. This intervention set the foundation for an expanded program, also funded by the US-DOS in Colombia, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago.

8- Migration in the Americas

Migrations are a multidimensional process that involves a complex interplay of risks and opportunities for individuals, communities, and states. In the Americas, this phenomenon has become particularly relevant over the last few decades and has become increasingly diversified beyond the act of departure. Many migrants return to their countries of origin; others move around among several countries or migrate on a regular basis.

While the region's total population represents only 13 percent of the global population, nearly 17 percent of global migration comes from this part of the world, and one of every six migrants in the world was born in the Americas. The immigrant population in the Americas has increased from around 34 million in 1990 to 61 million in 2013, an increase of nearly 78 percent, compared with the 42 percent increase seen in the rest of the world.

Moreover, this is clearly a hemispheric phenomenon. Almost the entirety of this increase was in Canada and the United States, where the immigrant population has nearly doubled since 1990, to 53 million people in 2013. By contrast, the immigrant population in Latin America and the Caribbean has increased by only 19 percent since 1990, to 7.7 million in 2013. However, if the evolution is measured over the 2000–2013 timeframe, the increase in the immigrant population in Latin America and the Caribbean for 2013 has been slightly higher than that seen in Canada and the United States (35 percent v. 31 percent).

The United States is, of course, the most important destination country for migrants from the Americas but also for migrants from the entire world. Between 1990 and 2013, the population of immigrants in the United States doubled. In 2013, five of every six migrants from the Americas and one of every five in the entire world lived in the United States.

While in recent decades the United States has continued to be a magnet for potential immigrants from the Americas, many other countries have experienced large increases in their own immigrant populations, frequently from neighboring countries.

On average, 64 percent of immigrants in the Caribbean come from the same region—63 percent in the case of the Andean region and 44 percent in the Southern Cone. In the case of Central America, the percentage is lower (32 percent), because a high percentage of immigrants in Mexico come from the United States.

In terms of the emigration of citizens from Latin America and the Caribbean, this has grown at a faster pace than worldwide emigration (3 percent

v. 1.5 percent). In 2013, around 35 million of the region's citizens lived outside their country of birth. Close to three quarters of them are in the United States and many of the rest are in Argentina, Venezuela, Spain, and Canada, in that order.

Recent data confirm the growing trend of migration movements in the Hemisphere. In the 2010-2013 timeframe, international migration to all countries in the Americas grew by an average of 5 percent per year, although the figure jumped to 17 percent per year in the specific case of Latin America and the Caribbean. This represents a sharp rate of increase in immigration, and if it continues, it would mean that immigration would almost double in just four years.

This overview of migration movements in the region has forced national governments to take action to address some of the most urgent issues related to the multiple effects both for countries of origin as well as for destination and transit countries for migrants. For one thing, adding migrant communities to the new societies that take them in means providing basic services to this population, such as education, housing, and health, as well as access to sources of demand for labor and communication services, among others. In countries of origin, the regions that send out migrants face the dismemberment of families and communities, young people being raised without fathers, and migration often the only alternative to deal with poverty.

In short, the scope, complexity, and international nature of migrations in the Americas require a Hemisphere-wide approach.

Since the 1980s, the OAS has been a pioneer in this effort, developing "Demographic and Legal Studies on International Migration." With a technical team made up of specialists from around the Hemisphere, from 1985 to 1995 the OAS prepared 15 migration profiles on countries in the Americas.

The Special Rapporteurship on Migrant Workers and their Families, established in 1996 in the framework of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, emerged in a context in which the Organization was concerned about giving proper attention to an especially vulnerable group, one exposed to violations of their human rights.

The Rapporteurship has been tracking the major migration-related challenges being faced in the region and how these challenges affect the situation of migrant workers and their families. The Rapporteurship closely follows the political, social, and economic developments that affect migration flows; studies changes and debates taking place in the area of migration-related legislation and policies; and examines state practices on migration and presents specific recommendations to the OAS member states on issues related to the protection and promotion of migrants' human rights.

Despite these efforts, up until 2005 the migration issue had little visibility in the activity of the OAS General Secretariat and hardly any in the OAS Permanent Council and Assemblies. We were able to turn this situation around, in response to demands from the member states, by consolidating management of the migration issue within the Organization.

Currently, we are at the forefront of hemispheric efforts to ensure the protection of the human rights of migrants and their families and foster multilateral dialogue so that migration can help drive human and economic development in societies of origin and destination. In 2005, the OAS General Assembly adopted the Inter-American Program for the Promotion and Protection of the Human Rights of Migrants, Including Migrant Workers and their Families, to develop cooperative actions and best practices; integrate them into the work of OAS bodies, agencies, and entities; and link them to developments in the member states, multilateral organizations, and civil society.

The general objectives of the program are to: promote and protect the human rights of migrants, including migrant workers and their families, through, *inter alia*, the identification and implementation of cooperative actions and the exchange of best practices; integrate considerations relating to the human rights of migrants and their families into the work of OAS bodies, agencies, and entities, taking into consideration a gender perspective; and link the work being carried out by OAS bodies, agencies, and entities with the activities of states, multilateral organizations, and civil society, including migrants themselves and their families.

The program is currently in the process of being reviewed and updated by the member states.

In October 2007, the OAS Permanent Council established the Special Committee on Migration Issues, in order to analyze issues and migration flows from an integral perspective, taking into account the relevant provisions of international law, especially international human rights law.

From 2007 to 2012, the Special Committee held regular meetings, with the participation of different actors and organizations working on the migration issue in the Hemisphere, in order to exchange information on migration flows in the region, focusing on best practices in migration management and policies and promoting horizontal cooperation among the member states on this issue.

In 2012, the General Assembly created the Committee on Migration Issues in the Inter-American Council for Integral Development. This is a permanent committee, which reaffirms the importance of the issue at the OAS and identifies the committee as the principal OAS forum responsible for the migration issue.



Photo: Gabriel Tamalet

The main guidelines for its efforts are:

- i. A comprehensive, balanced, and technical approach that takes into consideration the contributions and challenges represented by migration for countries of origin, transit, destination, and/or return.
- ii. The importance of dialogue, exchanges of good practices, and the implementation of international, regional, subregional, and bilateral cooperation initiatives in the migration area, to expand the contribution made by migration to the Hemisphere's integral development.

The Migration and Development Program (MIDE) and the Continuous Reporting System on International Migration for the Americas (SICREMI): In 2008, the General Secretariat implemented the Migration and Development Program (MIDE) for the purpose of contributing to the promotion and development of public policies that lead to improved migration management in the Americas by facilitating policy dialogue, cooperation, research, and the development of information systems on international migration to and from the Americas.

Currently, MIDE is part of the Department of Social Inclusion of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI). It serves as technical secretariat to assist the Committee on Migration Issues (CAM) of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI).

Since 2009 MIDE, in conjunction with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), has developed and implemented the Continuous Reporting System on International Migration for the Americas (SICREMI).

SICREMI collects information on immigration to the Americas and emigration from the Americas to OECD countries, with a comprehensive overview of migration flows to and from the Americas.

The systematization of administrative records and the annual frequency of the reports is a comparative advantage of the SICREMI project over other initiatives, since it makes it possible to have information available on migration flows without having to wait during periods between censuses or until special surveys are done.

The strategy of collecting data and compiling and generating information consists of establishing a network of national correspondents, supported by those institutions that play a key role in producing information on migration (migration offices or institutes, national statistical offices, ministries responsible for migration matters, etc.).

The SICREMI Annual Report is unique in the Hemisphere for its scope of coverage (20 countries in the third edition, SICREMI 2014), content (statistics on migration flows, regulatory frameworks, and public policies on migration), and timeliness of the information. Since its beginnings, SICREMI has published three editions, in 2011, 2012, and 2014.

Other initiatives and research on the subject of international migration and social security, migration outside the Hemisphere, and a database of migration legislation, among others, have generated various publications and applications since MIDE was created in 2009.

The migration issue has become more visible politically in the past year due to decisions made in the Caribbean region by some member states, decisions that in the opinion of the Inter-American Commission and Inter-American Court of Human Rights infringe on the rights of migrant populations, especially those of Haitian origin, in some countries of the Caribbean. The Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic's decisions concerning the nationality of origin of persons born in that country who are considered non-residents because they were born while their parents were in the country illegally led to a reaction from the IACHR. The report this autonomous entity is due to issue on the subject is still pending. The situation in the Bahamas, which has also caused concern in the region, has not yet been addressed within the Organization, although the Bahamian government has informed the Permanent Council of its decisions.

9- Youth as Protagonists: The YABT Experience

Youth-related issues are included prominently in all the work we have done over the last few years. Besides the obvious presence of youth in the social arena, programs related to human rights, public security, drugs, and migration, among others, devote particular attention to the issue. Important events have been held, coordinated by the Office of the Assistant Secretary General, to discuss the major issues of education, employment, and the vulnerability of youth.

The most significant youth-related experience in these 10 years comes from a group of young people who make up the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT), an OAS-affiliated institution which maintains its autonomous status. It is dedicated to promoting the creative talent of young people in the Americas through productive activities that can also address the problem of education and unemployment faced by young people.

Toward this end, the YABT develops projects in many Latin American and Caribbean countries. But its best-known project is its talent and innovation competition, which is held every year in the days leading up to our General Assembly and also on the occasion of the Summits of the Americas. It is called the Talent and Innovation Competition of the Americas or, as it is better known, TIC Americas. The first edition was held in Panama in 2007, and TIC Americas has continued uninterrupted ever since, thanks to the support of private and public companies and institutions. Over the course of these years, more than 13,300 projects were generated, which involved and benefited more than 31,000 young people from across the Hemisphere. The young people receive awards in four categories: social innovation, economic innovation, environmental innovation or Eco-Challenge, and the Americas Cultural Entrepreneurship Award.

Since this is an international competition geared toward understanding and awarding business plans, these projects represent a treasure trove that will continue to benefit not only the young people but the entire population of our region as these projects are implemented and become effective instruments for our countries' economic development.



***Talent and Innovation Competition of
the Americas TIC Americas, 2014***

The young men and women who make up the YABT are also the driving force behind other OAS activities geared toward youth. For example, they have helped organize the Young Americas Forum, which has taken place during the last four Summits and has delivered a Youth Declaration to the Presidents and Heads of State during the Dialogue of Heads of State with Social Actors. This has given this youth foundation the legitimacy to play a leading role in coordinating the work with young people that must take place over the coming years.



Presentation of the Report on The Drug Problem in the Americas to the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, 2013

IX- LEADERSHIP ON THE DRUG PROBLEM

1- The Report on the Drug Problem in the Americas and its Impact

At the Sixth Summit of the Americas held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia in April 2012, the Heads of State and of Government of the Americas charged the Organization of American States with preparing a report on the drug problem in the Americas. The remit conveyed by the Chair of the Summit, Juan Manuel Santos, was categorical: the report should be frank, thorough and shed light on actions taken so far to address the drug problem, without shying away from sensitive issues and without fear of breaking taboos in order to pave the way for new approaches to the drug problem.

One year later, the job was done. In May 2013, the report on the drug problem was delivered to the President of Colombia, and through him, to all of the Heads of State and of Government, and it immediately had an enormous impact. Less than a month later, the OAS General Assembly met in Antigua Guatemala and devoted its first session to the problem. Its conclusions testified to the pressing need our governments and peoples were feeling to revisit the policies that had been dominant in the Hemisphere and yet had failed to achieve expected outcomes.

In only sixteen months, we were able to throw wide the door to an open discussion, as frank as it was unprecedented, of all the options available in the quest for more effective policies for dealing with the drug problem in the Hemisphere. In the United States, the New York Times noted that: "the report effectively breaks the taboo on considering alternatives to the current prohibitionist approach." In Colombia, the magazine *Semana* said: "this report opens up another front in the debate between the various alternatives to address the various stages of the drug business, as well as the consequences of drug use."

"The OAS and the countries of Latin America are making a positive contribution to efforts to break the taboo that for so long has silenced debate about a more humane and effective policy," said Presidents Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Ricardo Lagos, Ernesto Zedillo and César Gaviria in a written statement on the report in May 2013. And the Global Commission on Drug Policies, whose

members included the four former Presidents mentioned above, plus Jorge Sampaio and Ernesto Zedillo, Kofi Annan, Mario Vargas Llosa, Javier Solana, George Schultz, Paul Volcker and other important world figures, said in its publication "Taking Control: Pathways to Drug Policies that Work", coinciding with the report, that "putting health and community safety first requires a fundamental reorientation of policy priorities and resources, from failed punitive enforcement to proven health and social interventions."

We see in these and many other comments the chief merit of the work entrusted to the OAS by the Presidents of all the countries of the Hemisphere in Cartagena de Indias. The report has set a "before" and an "after" in our way of addressing the drug phenomenon, by breaking down the barriers to transparent dialogue and paving the way toward a debate without blinders or false prejudices that can only benefit our societies as they confront an issue so destructive that it wrecks havoc on rich and poor, men and women, children, youth and the elderly. And it does so drastically, equally, to all.

The report on the drug problem unambiguously recognized the importance of the problem as highlighted by the region's leaders:

"...the problem exists and is a cause for concern. It worries not just the Heads of State and Government who commissioned this report, but ordinary citizens as well. It worries women who see the drug trafficking in their neighborhood as an imminent threat to their children and to the integrity of their home; judges who have to convict a seller or, in many countries, a user of drugs; volunteers in NGOs trying to help drug-dependent young people; and legislators trying to make sense of the conflicting desires of their constituents vis-à-vis the problem.... All of them experience the problem, albeit in different ways. And the same is true of countries, wherein the problem manifests itself in different ways depending on their particular circumstances.... This is not just because of the diversity among each country of the hemisphere, but because the problem itself comprises different manifestations. These also have varying impacts on our countries, to an extent that renders it difficult, if not impossible, to encompass in a single set of policy recommendations the variety and magnitude of the challenges posed by the problem in its numerous manifestations.... The starting point for this analysis is, therefore, that there is not just one drug-related problem but rather a host of problems which are, in turn, related both to the diverse characteristics of our countries and peoples, and answer the crucial questions it poses."

To tackle this huge task, the Organization brought together more than 300 civil servants, specialists from the private sector and international organizations, academics, and social and political leaders from all over the Hemisphere who contributed their opinions, their inputs on specific aspects, and their experience and willingness to the preparation of the report entrusted to us.

Why was this task given to the General Secretariat? Because, the fact is, there is no other body in the region in which a hemispheric problem can be addressed as broadly and frankly as can be done in the OAS. It is clearly a hemispheric issue: the drug problem affects all the countries in the Americas, albeit in different ways and with different impacts. That diversity of circumstances generates a variety of approaches and interests that, although not divergent, prompt a variety of possible responses. Only the OAS could bring that variety of approaches, interests, and options together under one roof, and, through the frank dialogue and urge for unity and cooperation among States that is characteristic of our Organization, find points of convergence and consensus among all and continue to forge ahead in a framework of solidarity, cooperation, and unity.

In the United States, we, together with the Executive Secretary of CICAD and other senior OAS officials, presented the report to a number of civil society forums. It provoked intense debate, particularly following the emergence of a legal marijuana industry in the States of Colorado and Washington, while the medical use of marijuana is already authorized in many other States. At the initiative of the U.S. Department of Justice, which took an approach that fosters the principles of proportionality and the protection of human rights, a process has started to review and reduce sentences for various crimes related to the world of drugs, including simple possession and drug dealing.

Significantly, the Obama Administration has now stopped using the phrase "war on drugs". This is not just a shift in rhetoric. Rather, it reflects a different notion of the best ways to address the problem. The President himself said it explicitly: "We are not going to arrest ourselves out of the drug problem."

In Uruguay, we delivered the report directly to President Mujica and his close advisers just before the approval of a law that created a regulated cannabis market. The design of this regulated market takes the public health approach advocated in the report, and as well as a preventive approach to violence and illicit trafficking. Also, in June 2013, the Secretariat participated in a debate in Mexico about future drug policy options with representatives of the Federal Government, Congress, the government of Mexico City, and civil society organizations. The new national program to prevent violence and crime implemented by the government of President Enrique Peña Nieto posits the need to adopt broad and multisectoral prevention programs, which coincides with the report.

The report was also discussed with a group of more than 500 representatives of the Federal and State health sectors and civil society. The ensuing debate focused largely on ways of satisfying the growing demand for prevention and treatment services, a central theme of our report.

Colombia has been one of the countries where the debate on drug policy has been the liveliest. The report was delivered there to the governments of the Americas when it was submitted to President Santos as the host of the Summit. Subsequently, a national multidisciplinary commission was formed in Colombia, and agreement has already been reached on how to address the subject of drugs and drug trafficking in the peace negotiations between the Government and the FARC.

Interest in the report in civil society forums has also been significant: discussions have taken place at, for example, Chatham House in London before a European group, the Inter-American Dialogue, the Council on Foreign Relations and the Woodrow Wilson Center in the United States, and in the Congresses and a number of academic institutions in Mexico, Chile, Colombia, and many other countries. These forums afforded the opportunity to discuss the topic and the report in detail with noted international experts. The meeting of the Ibero-American Network of Nongovernmental Organizations working on Drug Dependency held in Montevideo, Uruguay in 2014 was devoted exclusively to analysis of the report.

European countries also studied the report with great interest. It was presented to a variety of forums in London, Madrid, Lisbon, and Paris, and to the European Commission in Brussels and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary of the United Kingdom in London. The public health approach, the decriminalization of personal use, and evidence-based policies coincide fully with European thinking led by the OAS partner agency, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

A unique opportunity to strike up a dialogue with the ministers of health of the Hemisphere presented itself at the Assembly of the Pan American Health Organization in Washington, D.C. last September. There, we were able to further strengthen the ties between us, with a view to boosting the public health approach through a joint work plan. A similar opportunity arose at the IV Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas (MISPA) in Medellín, last November. There, the Secretary General and the Executive Secretary of CICAD presented the main contents of the report and garnered from the ministers, and from the debate among them, important points of view regarding the report's impact on the design of future hemispheric cooperation initiatives in this field.

It is also important to highlight the interest shown by many Heads of State at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2013, where the joint intervention by the Presidents of Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico testified once again to the readiness of governments in the region to make substantive changes to their drug control policies and to do so in the context of broad dialogue amongst themselves.

Through all these presentations and dialogues, the report has established the leadership role of the OAS in confronting the multidimensional challenge of the drug problem, including its health and citizen security pillars. It has also helped to reinforce the humanitarian approach to this topic as the preferred approach in the Western Hemisphere and in Europe.

Clearly, it takes time to change laws and policies and change cannot be expected overnight. Forty years of the “war on drugs” have given rise to a host of laws and regulations, entrenched bureaucracies, and convictions that do not just go away. For that reason, it is unreasonable to expect that the changes needed will come about at the same time in all countries or in a short period of time. The report indicated that each country had to address its own particular manifestations of the problem and time has proved it right.

2- Collective Action by the OAS

In addition to the debate engendered by the report, the OAS continued its work program, with meetings of the CICAD Commission, other expert events and particularly, the General Assembly of May 2013 in Antigua Guatemala, and then the special session of the General Assembly in 2014 in Guatemala City.

The OAS General Assembly in Antigua, Guatemala in 2013 was devoted in its entirety to the issue. The Assembly issued a Declaration agreed on by the twenty-nine foreign ministers present, asking the member states to begin a process of consultations on the report. Such consultations, which were lively and fruitful, were held nationally, subregionally, regionally and Hemisphere-wide. In some cases, they opened up fresh debates, and have also produced significant agreements that offer a solid way forward for the future.

We had a notable opportunity to present the report to the summit of the countries of Central America through the Central American Integration System (SICA), and also to the summit of the countries of the Caribbean, through CARICOM. Of the SICA countries, Guatemala has formed a national commission on

drugs that will examine the country's current domestic drug policy, and that is due to present an official report in the coming months. The countries of the Caribbean have also set up a commission to study issues related to the decriminalization of the personal use of marijuana.

The Foreign Minister of Guatemala and the Secretary General presented the results of the special session of the General Assembly to the President of the United Nations General Assembly in New York and to the U.N. Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna. The OAS will continue to disseminate and promote its proposals, with a view to securing consensus at the special session of the UN General Assembly on Drugs, to be held in 2016.

3- Some points of consensus

Importantly, a little more than two years after the drugs report was presented, some significant points of consensus have emerged from the debate it opened up.

First point of consensus: The drug problem should be addressed from a public health approach.

Even though the 2010 Hemispheric Drug Strategy had already identified drug dependence as “a chronic, relapsing disease” that needed to be “addressed and treated as a public health matter”, in practice few countries had been able to take on the obligations needed at a political level to provide the necessary backing and support for this approach, or to earmark resources and commit to addressing the problem.

The public health approach aims to develop comprehensive interventions with a focus on three areas: interventions that are designed to impact the individual or the population at risk, the availability of substances, and an environment that tolerates or accepts drug use. An effective demand reduction policy requires political support, a solid legal framework, and the resources and budget necessary to back up those policies.

That is why the report states that it is totally contradictory to treat a drug addict as someone who is ill and simultaneously punish him or her for using drugs or for having committed a drug-use related offense. For that same reason, we insisted that it was necessary to embark on a proactive search for alternatives to incarceration for those who are the last link in the drug distribution chain. We also pointed out that the option of decriminalization

of personal use--already adopted by twelve countries in our Hemisphere--merited serious consideration as an option for other countries that have not done so.

That criterion, which the report describes as “the public health approach,” has now prevailed as a point of consensus among the States of the Americas. As a result of a meeting with the directors of the Pan American Health Organization in September 2013, interest in the drug issue among the Ministers of Health grew livelier. The follow-up to that was the negotiation of a joint CICAD/PAHO work plan, which includes specific activities such as the convocation of joint subregional meetings of ministers of public health and national drug commissioners. The first such meeting--which brought the Central American countries together under the aegis of SICA--took place in San Salvador in June 2014.

It is true that there is much still to be done in this area, since there are many facets to the work of instrumentalizing that vision and health approach, which will involve a long process of institutionalization. However, we are also aware that the progress made over the past two years would not have been possible had it not been for the process of analysis that the report generated in the OAS member states and elsewhere.

Second point of consensus: Judicial reforms must be enacted to provide alternatives to incarceration.

As pointed out in the report, the enforcement of harsh drug laws has sent the incarceration rate skyrocketing in many of our countries, contributing to serious overcrowding in the prisons. At the same time, drug use does not stop at the prison gate, which means that the root problem is sometimes not addressed (or treated, in the case of drug dependence) at any stage of the judicial and/or criminal proceedings.

Several countries have already decided to examine the need to adopt measures to revert this situation, in such a way that human rights and fundamental penal guarantees are respected, while at the same time public safety is maintained and guaranteed. This issue is clearly spelled out in the Declaration of Antigua, reflecting the concerns felt by many OAS member states. The specific issue of the proportionality of sentencing is a priority.

As chair of CICAD, in December 2013 Colombia proposed establishing a working group to analyze and generate alternatives to penal and penitentiary treatment at every link in the chain of the world drug problem, with a gender perspective and covering both producers and users. The group began its work in June 2014, and has analyzed options for differing situations that arise before an individual comes into contact with the criminal justice system; pretrial situations within the justice system; alternatives for persons convicted, and alternatives for individuals in prison.

Several specific lines of action have been proposed for consideration in this area. Among the most important are revising the severity of sentencing and reviewing the criminalization of specific types of profiles of drug-related offenders; the search for alternatives to incarceration for drug-dependent offenders and for those petty offenders who are the weakest links in the drug trafficking chain; the use of a public health approach for drug-dependent offenders inside the prison systems, as well as options for integrating drug-related offenders into society and the job market. This latter approach may be envisaged either within the modality of alternatives to incarceration or as an option for those already within the prison system.

Given the above approaches and the experiences that have been identified, the adoption or design of alternatives to incarceration should be directed to the search for proportionality in punishing drug-related behaviors and reducing the role of the penal system as the response to such behaviors. What we would like is to promote the creation of a menu of possibilities that each state can adapt to its own particular context and circumstances.

The OAS has promoted a parallel ongoing dialogue with the judiciary (including the presidents of supreme courts, public defenders/Ombudsmen and prosecutors), the Executive Branch itself, the health system and civil society stakeholders to identify specific court-supervised alternatives to incarceration for drug-dependent offenders. As a result, in the last four years the number of countries that are exploring, implementing or strengthening alternative models, called drug treatment courts, has gone from four to seventeen.

Third point of consensus: Transnational organized crime is a major player in the drug problem.

As the report pointed out, in addition to damage to health, the process whereby drugs are produced, distributed, sold, and used has generated an illicit business that is detrimental to the security of our citizens, their human and material wellbeing, and the integrity of our institutions. The report goes on to say that this activity has fostered the rise or strengthening of giant transnational criminal networks that have expanded their operations to other types of crime, so much so that one wonders whether even the disappearance of the illegal drug economy would bring an end to their criminal activities.

Other illicit transnational activities perpetrated by these organizations include arms trafficking, contraband, product piracy, trafficking in persons, the smuggling of migrants, trafficking in human organs, trafficking in endangered animal species, and trafficking in archaeological artifacts, among others. Domestically, organized crime activities include-- apart from the production and sale of controlled substances – the illegal sale of arms, the sale of pirated products and contraband, the control and exploitation of

prostitution, robbery and the sale of stolen goods, illegal mining, kidnapping, and extortion, including the victimization of migrants.

Today, there is a consensus in the region that these criminal networks, committing what is defined in law as transnational organized crime must be prevented and fought through international cooperation. Accordingly, last year's OAS General Assembly declared that the member states were committed to stepping up their efforts to prevent, detect, and punish laundering of the proceeds of criminal activities, especially drug trafficking and corruption, and to reinforce international cooperation to prevent the entry, flow, and exit of such proceeds into, in, and from our financial systems.

The General Assembly, in Asunción in June 2014, decided to instruct the OAS General Secretariat to establish and coordinate an inter-American network for the prevention of violence and crime, and urged that consideration be given to the February 2012 amendments to the 40 recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on money laundering. These amendments emphasize developing operational skills in international cooperation to recover and seize the proceeds of transnational organized crime.

Fourth point of consensus: It is essential to strengthen judicial and law-and-order institutions.

The report pointed out that in many countries of the Hemisphere, and especially in those that might be described as transit countries for controlled substances, the weakness of state institutions is exacerbated by acts of corruption committed by the criminal organizations themselves that enable them to make violence their main modus operandi. Under those circumstances, the report says, violence becomes their only way of resolving disputes with their competitors and of imposing their power over the community and in many cases over the State itself.

The report also recalled what was said in the 2010 joint UNDP/OAS report "Our Democracy" to the effect that "not enough States explain why we have the world's highest homicide rate, why drug cartels rule whole territories and influence public decision-making, and why there are large areas in our territories that are not ruled by law."

A broad consensus now exists in our countries and among our States regarding the need to strengthen judicial and law-and-order institutions. Some countries have made significant efforts to professionalize their police forces and to clean up and strengthen their judicial institutions. For others, however, this is an ongoing challenge that will require major financial and human capital resources, over a lengthy period of time, if they are to achieve more robust judicial and law-and-order institutions.

Two years after the report was presented and as a result of the debate that it generated, we can see the way forward in addressing the problem.

In the field of public health, subregional initiatives need to be developed and joint priorities for action established; information, monitoring, and evaluation systems need to be set up; a frame of reference needs to be created to help countries develop public health policies in the drug area; better quality of care for people with drug use problems needs to be fostered using quality criteria for service delivery; and curricula and materials need to be designed to train health care professionals to treat problems related to drug use.

With regard to judicial reform on the question of alternatives to incarceration, the time has come when a consistent effort needs to be made to revise harsh sentencing and the criminalization of certain types of drug offenses. A pressing need is to seek out alternatives to incarceration for drug-dependent offenders or for individuals in the trafficking chain who commit petty crimes. Getting rid of incarceration for simple possession of small quantities of drugs now seems to be necessary in the laws of some countries. Means must be found through the judiciary for these people and for those who are sentenced to prison to enter the job market when they return to society. Consideration should also be given to the idea that one of the purposes of any judicial reform in this area is the use of a public health approach to drug-dependent offenders within the prison system.

Evidence of the part played by transnational organized crime in and outside the drug problem should lead to measures adopted not just within States but, and above all, among them, to foster and broaden cooperation on judicial, police, and prevention issues. Now that crime and violence are international in scope, we have no option but to come up with equally transnational ways of preventing and fighting it.

Finally, we need to persevere in our efforts to strengthen judicial and law-and-order institutions and, to do so, we must generate as many instances for international cooperation as are needed. In the area of judicial cooperation, the OAS already deploys important cooperation tools. Major international cooperation efforts have also been undertaken in connection with the restructuring and professionalization of police forces, albeit in this case mainly at the bilateral level. There is enormous potential for developing a police cooperation system at the hemispheric level, regulated by the OAS. That potential needs to be exploited because the challenge is enormous and one weak national link would inevitably undermine the whole international crime control chain in the Hemisphere.

There is little doubt that we have come a long way since we presented the report commissioned from us by the Heads of State of the Americas. Nevertheless, we still have a long way to go. As we continue down that path, many hurdles are likely to put the collective solidarity of the States of the Americas to the test, along with their resolve to seek collective solutions to the problems that beset them. For this reason, we have on several occasions reiterated the recommendations made in the report. Whatever hurdles it encounters, cooperation is necessary. It will need to be shaped by a comprehensive, evidence-based, and scientific approach in tune with each country's circumstances and needs.

4- Ongoing Action by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission

The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission was key to the development of the report and subsequent discussion of it. Three meetings of CICAD, the Hemisphere's technical body on the subject of drugs, were devoted to analyzing the report. But it is also important to remember that prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation, to which the report gives high priority, have long been key components of CICAD's work and appear prominently in the current Action Plan.

The work program covers initiatives in public health, alternatives to incarceration, social integration and the management of seized assets, all in line with the conclusions of the report. In addition, CICAD has engaged in a new rapprochement with civil society and academia, as well as intense debates on new marijuana policies in the Hemisphere, which have focused on the challenges of implementing regulatory systems that pay due attention to prevention and health impacts, particularly among young people.

5- The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM)

The Mechanism was created in 1988 to monitor the progress of individual and collective efforts by all of the participating countries in the work of drug control. Since it started operations thanks to a mandate from the Second Summit of the Americas, the MEM has become a platform that has enabled member states to make a collaborative and impartial evaluation of drug control policies in the Hemisphere. The MEM is based on the principles of sovereignty, territorial jurisdiction, and shared responsibility and assistance in identifying the member states' strengths and weaknesses in the areas of drug control policies and practices. It is considered to be "the only valid hemispheric tool for evaluating drug control policies in the countries that make up the inter-American system." (Declaration of Antigua Guatemala, forty-third regular session of the OAS General Assembly, 2013).

The MEM measures the progress that member states have made in addressing the drug problem and other related crimes by means of 27 standardized recommendations based on the Action Plan of the Hemispheric Drug Strategy 2011-2015 approved by CICAD. The thematic areas of institutional strengthening, demand reduction, supply reduction, control measures, and international cooperation are covered in the 27 recommendations that are used to evaluate all of the member states.

On the issue of security, the MEM is geared to enhancing national institutions for the control of drug trafficking and related offenses, improving information systems in those areas, and taking measures to control trafficking in arms, ammunition, explosives, and other materials related to drug trafficking, as well as strengthening institutions and laws on the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution, and control of money laundering. The fundamental objective of the MEM continues to be to enhance regional dialogue and cooperation in the field of drug control. Overall, the MEM is one of the principal protagonists in the provision of assistance to member states to help them prevent and improve their controls over drug trafficking and related crimes, which represent a serious threat to the security of the Hemisphere.

New institutional capacities have been developed over the past decade to address trafficking in and the sale and use of controlled substances. Cooperation by the General Secretariat to address the new threats and changes in drug production and trafficking and the consequences of drug use has been evolving: the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) developed new programs on the sale of drugs over the Internet, the use of indicators on human behavior to identify passengers who might be transporting drugs, and control of synthetic drugs, including new psychoactive substances (NPS), identifying and finding tourist ships, and the use of inexpensive, commercially available software for counterdrug operational intelligence analysis (ANAOPS).

The member states of the OAS are facing the challenge of addressing growing problems of drug abuse and drug-related violence. The governments have to respond to the need to strengthen their institutional and human capacities in the areas of violence prevention, and treatment and rehabilitation interventions that use a public health approach. The demand reduction programs developed by the General Secretariat through the Executive Secretariat of CICAD provide support to member states in this endeavor through: 1) the direct participation of the ministries of health, national drug commissions and civil society in the formulation of public policy on drug abuse prevention and treatment; 2) the development of hemispheric standards for the prevention and treatment of drug abuse; 3) offering training and state-approved certification for front-line health

care workers, prevention professionals, and staff working in treatment services; 4) starting up mechanisms to accredit inpatient and outpatient drug treatment facilities, and 5) offering training to providers of specialized services working with high risk populations such as adolescents, women, and offenders in prison. These programs are conducted in close coordination with the Pan American Health Organization, COPOLAD, RIOD, the Central American Integration System, CARICOM, the University of the West Indies, and other subregional, regional, and international organizations and academic institutions, in an effort to meet the needs of OAS member states in demand reduction.

Over the period 2005-2015, there were many successful initiatives in demand reduction throughout the Hemisphere. Of particular note is the Training and Certification Program for Drug and Violence Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation (PROCCER), which is operating in many member in which diagnostic assessments were conducted to evaluate their capacity to provide treatment and their need for training of service providers. Since the program began in 2007, El Salvador has trained 600 service providers and certified a total of 185 treatment service providers; 611 service providers have received training in Nicaragua since 2011; since 2008, 165 people in Guatemala have received training; since 2011, 456 have received training in Costa Rica, and since 2012, 83 service providers have received training in Panama. Mexico has provided training for 602 service providers since 2010, and has assessed a total of 448 treatment service providers. Since 2011, the Caribbean has trained and certified 211 prevention professionals and treatment service providers. Since 2010, FLACT has trained therapeutic counselors in all of its 19 member countries throughout the Hemisphere, with specialized care in Brazil since 2011.

The financing of criminal networks represents a major challenge for democratic governance. Addressing it means depriving criminals of the proceeds of their illicit activities. Over the last decade, we have, through the Executive Secretariat of CICAD, conducted a training program in the prevention and punishment of money laundering, in order to improve the capacity of judges and prosecutors to try and punish money laundering and related offenses. This program has trained more than one thousand people, and has produced four editions of the publication *Fighting Money Laundering through the Judicial System*, which has served as a reference for court judgments in member states such as Peru, El Salvador, Uruguay, and others.

Further, the BIDAS project has been carried out since 2008 to strengthen the legal and organizational frameworks of a number of member states in relation to the detection, seizure, forfeiture, administration, and disposition of assets of illicit origin. In addition to numerous publications that have had an impact around the region, the project has promoted the passage and implementation

of legislative measures in Argentina (Decree 826/2011 and the Criminal Code), Uruguay (Law 18494, Law 18362 and Executive Decree 339-2010), and El Salvador (Law on Forfeiture), as well as other legal reforms to create and/or enhance specialized units for the administration of seized and forfeited assets. The project is under way in Brazil and Paraguay in 2015.

The creation and development of Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs), which includes the drafting of legislation, the design of information technologies infrastructure, and the enhancement of strategic and operational analytic capacities, has been an effective contribution to the fight against money laundering in the Hemisphere. All countries of the region now have FIUs in operation, and they have all received specialized training in subjects related to the receipt, analysis, and dissemination of financial intelligence information. Synergies with other work groups both inside and outside the Organization such as CICTE, IDB, IMF, the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America (GAFILAT) and UNODC, were created to develop technical assistance on this issue.



***OAS Secretary for Multidimensional Security,
Adam Blackwell and Bishop Fabio Colindres, El
Salvador, 2012***

X- MULTIDIMENSIONAL SECURITY

The Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted in Mexico at the OAS Special Conference on Security, is our principal guide on security matters. At that Conference, the essential content of one of the pillars of the OAS since its founding was substantively modified.

The 2003 Declaration had its roots in the transcendental shifts in the strategic, political, global, and hemispheric situation that had occurred in the previous decades. Dictatorships and civil wars had ended, and the region was experiencing a totally new situation in which the fundamental issues of the day were defending democracy, protecting human rights, establishing peace, and defending the rule of law. The convergence of these principles gave rise to a process of reaffirming democracy throughout the Hemisphere, starting with resolution AG/RES. 1080 (XXI-O/91) of the OAS General Assembly in Santiago, Chile in 1991, and culminating a decade later in the signing in Lima of the Inter-American Democratic Charter on September 11, 2001.

Amidst changes of this magnitude, it was apparent that the strategic vision of the Cold War, which had prevailed in the OAS since its founding, was completely obsolete. External aggression against the Hemisphere, which was a justification for the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty), never occurred as expected. Instead, the Treaty served to justify interventions and on the one occasion in which it could have been used, to prevent the South Atlantic War, it proved to be completely ineffective. Internal wars, which were also attributed exclusively to external influence, could also no longer justify that explanation. A new vision was needed to complement the great objectives of peace, democracy, and development with the security challenges of the present.

The Declaration on Security in the Americas formally sanctioned the interest of the American States in establishing security—not through conflict—but through cooperation and collective action.

The Declaration's great contribution is the guidance it gives in terms of a consistent and comprehensive vision of the whole set of security threats that our nations face. The concept of multidimensional security encompasses not only traditional threats to security, but also identifies a set of new threats emanating from different social spheres, and for which our States are also responsible.

A warning is warranted here. It is not a matter of saying, as the national security doctrine did, that everything is security; rather, security is the job of everyone, each from his or her specific role, within a democratic legal system and under democratic and participatory political leadership.

Guided by those principles, our concerns as countries today are aimed at implementing measures that allow us to fight the various manifestations of transnational crime today, which ranges from trafficking in persons and illegal drugs, to money laundering, and terrorism.

New priorities for the OAS and the General Secretariat emerged from these endeavors, requiring changes in structure for this new stage. Specifically, the Security area of the OAS was organized by creating a Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, which came to encompass the new Department of Public Security created in 2005, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism. Problems such as citizen's security, the fight against drug trafficking as well as all the various expressions of organized crime, and new threats of violence in our societies, were established as priorities for the new Secretariat since it was created.

There was a growing consensus among the member states and their constituents about the need to strengthen institutional capacity to prevent and fight crime, violence, and insecurity in the region. For this reason, we promoted the establishment of a hemispheric process on security, whose main political body is the Meeting of Ministers of Public Security of the Americas (MISPA). This forum, created in 2008, seeks to strengthen dialogue among the authorities responsible for public security in their respective countries, with a view to achieving effective cooperation, facilitating the transfer of knowledge, and supporting technical assistance and the exchange of promising practices in five areas of work:

- a. Public security management;
- b. Prevention of crime, violence, and insecurity;
- c. Police management;
- d. Citizen and community participation; and
- e. International cooperation.

1- Public Security

Created in 2005, the Department of Public Security focuses on supporting the member states to evaluate, prevent, confront, and respond to threats to citizens' security. From the outset we have undertaken various efforts to respond to the needs of the governments of the region in this regard. Several small and diverse programs, such as those related to transnational organized crime, prison systems, police cooperation, and others were merged into a single Department and have grown substantially since then.

Since 2013, through our Strategic Plan, we consolidated our efforts to strengthen police forces; prevent and reduce crime and violence; create and/or strengthen information systems on public security; and support penitentiary system reform.

One of the major achievements of our efforts in recent years has been the establishment of the Inter-American Network for Police Development and Professionalization, whose objective is to systematically and continuously strengthen the technical and professional progress of police forces in the member states.

The Network was designed on the basis of an assessment conducted in 2013, whose results made it possible to identify and understand the main challenges and knowledge requirements for police training. Based on that assessment, the four pillars of the Network were established: 1) virtual and in-person training courses to respond to the knowledge needs identified in the diagnosis, and help reduce the asymmetries that exist among police forces in the Americas; 2) A standing network for cooperation and information exchange whose purposes is to strengthen the training processes and promote a continuous exchange of information and knowledge among police officers in the various institutions and their instructors; 3) Sub-regional seminars that encourage the exchange of experiences, transfer of knowledge, and replication of best practices in police management; and 4) Certification of Police Forces in Quality Management Systems through ISO Standard 9001:2015, which is specifically for police institutions.

The Network includes the participation of three first tier universities in the region: Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil), Universidad de San Martín (Argentina), and Georgetown University (United States). These strategic partners help develop the police training curricula. Contributions for the development and implementation of the training courses are also received from the Network of Federal Police of Brazil, the Federal Police of Mexico, the Development Bank of Latin America, and Ameripol.

The Network is not only conceived as a comprehensive mechanism to leverage and improve the capacities of police institutions; it also undertakes to offer quality management certification for police institutions, as well as exchange information and experiences, and strengthen horizontal cooperation. This allows all participants in the Network to be connected, enabling our countries to move toward better coordinated responses to current and future challenges to public security.

Similarly, between 2012 and 2014, with the assistance of the Inter-American Commission of Women, we implemented a pilot project on Gender Violence Prevention to Promote Social Inclusion in one region of Costa Rica. The project sought to boost the police response and promote domestic violence prevention at the community level. Finally, the project produced a community intervention model to promote inclusive and participatory public policies for the prevention of domestic violence, which will hopefully be implemented elsewhere in Costa Rica and in other countries of the region.

In October of 2014 we presented to the Committee on Hemispheric Security a proposal to create an Inter-American Program for the Prevention of Violence and Crime. The central objective of the program is to provide member states with the tools to strengthen and expand the progress they have made in establishing policies, plans, programs, and projects to prevent violence and crime. Another objective is to establish a multi-sector initiative based on three simultaneous approaches: social mobilization, prevention, and intervention. The program also contemplates one cross-cutting approach for communication among stakeholders, and another for community involvement and participation.

***Secretary General with members of the maras,
El Salvador, 2012***



During the forty-fourth regular session of the General Assembly, we received a mandate to establish the Inter-American Network for the Prevention of Violence and Crime. The purpose of the network is to create a forum for dialogue among all the member states in order to exchange experiences, information, best practices, data, and opinions on various aspects related to crime and violence prevention in the Hemisphere. The forum may be joined by specialists on the topic, business owners, academics, and members of civil society interested in sharing their experiences. Another purpose of the Network is to generate statistics and systematic record-keeping, which will give details on different kinds of successful actions and their impact on areas of protection and crime and violence prevention in the region.

As regards trafficking in persons, during the past ten years the Meeting of National Authorities on the subject became institutionalized. In fulfillment of the OAS' commitment to prevent and combat this crime, the member states were convened, through their highest level representatives, and were assigned the task of preventing, punishing traffickers, protecting victims of human trafficking, and strengthening regional and international cooperation and information exchanges.

2- An Attempt to Reduce Violence

Since 2005 we have offered assistance to countries that are affected by criminal gangs. In 2007 we published a study called "Definition and Classification of Gangs." The study helped us better understand the phenomenon of gangs in Central America and to unify some concepts, which led to the start of a project the following year in all of the countries of that region. The general objective of the project is to offer socio-economic opportunities to both youth at risk for gang activity, and for organizations that work to prevent crime and youth violence.

Starting in 2012 we made a commitment to the social pacification program involving those gangs, particularly in El Salvador. In March of that year we decided to support the efforts that Monsignor Fabio Colindres, a military chaplain in that country, had been making to improve living conditions in the Salvadoran jails. Later, in July of that year we witnessed the first surrendering of weapons by the two main gangs in San Salvador, and finally, we formalized this relationship by signing a cooperation agreement with the government. Under this agreement, the government designated the then Minister of Justice and Public Security, David Munguía Payés, as its representative to the "Technical Coordinating Committee for

the Crime and Violence Reduction Process” –the entity we created to coordinate this process.

However, the truce process was tumultuous and was far from enjoying consensus support from society. New public security plans in El Salvador have only partially included the truce within a much broader process, and it is no longer as efficient as it was during the last two years of the previous administration. Clearly, however, support for the “gang truce” made it possible to reduce the violence problem for a while, saving many young lives.

In both El Salvador and Honduras our actions have continued to play an important role in the policies designed by those governments to reduce violence. In El Salvador we promoted and supported the “Violence-free Municipalities” initiative, and we are currently giving decisive support to new government initiatives in this regard. In Honduras we directly support the Public Security Reform Commission. We also hold meetings in the different countries and at our headquarters in Washington to achieve better understanding of the problem and enhance the capacity for collective action to address it.

3- Landmine Clearance and Weapons Destruction

Mandates from the General Assembly have instructed us to support efforts by member states to free their territories of antipersonnel landmines, destroy existing ones, and make the Americas the first landmine-free region of the world. In response, over the past ten years, through the Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines (AICMA), we have been providing financial, technical, logistical, and administrative support to the member states, when requested, for their national plans. To this end, we have supported a broad range of demining activities, including: humanitarian demining, education on the risks of landmines, physical and psychological rehabilitation of landmine victims as well as their social and economic reintegration, the destruction of stockpiled mines, and promoting bans on the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of antipersonnel landmines.



OAS Program of Assistance for the Control of Arms and Munitions (PACAM)

Thanks to AICMA's activities, Central America was declared a landmine-free zone in 2010. The destruction of more than 200,000 landmines and other explosives, the communication of prevention messages to almost one million people living in the affected areas, assistance for physical and psychological rehabilitation and the reintegration into society of some 1,700 survivors of landmine accidents, constituted some of AICMA's achievements in recent years. The program also provided financial and material assistance, as well as technical advisory services to enhance the development of anti-landmine capabilities in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. This made it possible for Ecuador and Peru to fully take over their demining programs, and it allowed Colombia to begin to clean up mined areas.

Another priority for our Organization is the prevention and eradication of the illicit manufacturing of firearms, ammunition, and explosives, because they are linked to drug trafficking, terrorism, transnational organized crime, and

other criminal activities. Therefore, we have carried out efforts to counteract such activity, as set forth in the mandates of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and other Related Materials (CIFTA). Additionally, we have insisted on the ratification of that Convention by all the member states, which continues to be a priority for the OAS.

The existence of unsecured or excessive stockpiles of dangerous ammunition and explosives poses a significant risk of unexpected explosions at the storage facilities. This constitutes a direct threat to nearby residents in several member states. Therefore, one of the initiatives undertaken in the framework of CIFTA was the provision of firearms marking machines and equipment to store that information, as well as training for the member states in the use of the equipment.

We also created the Program of Assistance for the Control of Arms and Munitions (PACAM), which specifically addresses physical threats to security, the management of arsenals, and the destruction of firearms, ammunition, and explosives. Between 2007 and 2015, PACAM provided assistance for securing and managing physical stocks to the governments of Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. This resulted in improved security at 18 storage facilities, and the destruction of almost 70,000 confiscated or surplus firearms. Some 500 national civil servants have been trained in the management and destruction of arsenals.

In response to requests from the governments of Central America, a pilot project was developed. In 2013 we received funding to provide technical and financial support to help member states analyze, handle, store, transport, and destroy large quantities of controlled chemical substances for the production of illegal drugs that had been seized. We also supervised the construction of a facility for the handling, temporary storage, and neutralization of such substances in Guatemala, which had begun to process chemicals, for their final disposal in a national cement factory. The objective was to eliminate half of the 3,000 tons of chemical precursors that have been seized by the Government of Guatemala. A future project will expand the site's capacity to eliminate all kinds of controlled chemical substances, including those confiscated by other Central American governments.

4- Expanding Actions against the Threat of Terrorism and New Threats

The Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) was created almost two decades ago. Its Secretariat has opted to specialize in the areas needed by the member states for which we are in a position to make a significant contribution. These activities are outlined below, including cyber security, which was not in the original mandate, but whose relevance has increased along with the serious threats to security posed by potential illegitimate uses of technology.

Tens of thousands of government officials in 31 countries of the Americas have received training to keep their ports, airports, events, and borders secure.

The OAS member states have received training for their employees, have built institutions, and have generated capacity in the areas of: border security, port and maritime facility security, preparedness for emerging threats, tourism security, document fraud detection, and others. Skills have also been developed in the areas of: stopping the proliferation of nuclear, biological, chemical, and radiological materials; to protect cyber networks; for security at large public events; and in drafting legislation on the financing of terrorism.

In the last decade, CICTE has trained more than 16,000 government officials in port security in 31 member states, and it has provided technical assistance to 69 ports. Additionally, it has taught more than 20 courses designed to strengthen national capacity for tourism security. This has led to the development of networks for tourism security in the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Mexico. Regarding border control, courses have been held in more than 15 countries of Central America and the Caribbean through joint projects with the Executive Secretariats of CICTE, CICAD, and the Department of Public Security. Efforts to strengthen institutional capacity to secure large public events, in turn, have translated into training for more than 400 government officials in various countries of the Americas.

Tourism security has been strengthened at the main tourism destinations of the Americas

The Tourism Security Program has generated worldwide interest, particularly since both the public and private sectors participate in its activities. Over the past five years, we have taught more than 20 courses on tourism security in order to strengthen tourism security capacity and develop a strong network of stakeholders in the public and private industry at the main tourism destinations of the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Mexico. Particularly, the program considerably improved the professional skills of those in charge of security in the private tourism industry, as well as the skills of law enforcement personnel—particularly the police in charge of tourism—and stressed the development of public-private partnerships for tourism security. Tourism security officers now have the training and tools necessary to assess risks, threats, and vulnerabilities in their current security systems, and can establish joint action plans to mitigate them.

Security personnel received training to prepare security and crisis management plans for hotels, tourism sites, and for the tourism industry, which can be used to prevent criminal and terrorist incidents. They also learned how to manage a crisis situation, and can recognize and correct any problems of response and communication with other entities, visitors, and the media. CICTE's Tourism Security Program has also helped develop the technical skills of staff to address security issues at the operational level and directly related to their needs, such as detecting suspicious behavior by visitors and citizens in tourism destinations or facilities.

Legislative assistance to fight terrorism

We have also provided technical assistance and training to the member states to increase ratifications and the effective use of regional and universal legal frameworks to fight terrorism and its financing. The Executive Secretariat of CICTE has also played an important role in providing technical support for the drafting of laws against terrorism in the Hemisphere. Specifically, CICTE assisted 25 member states to ratify the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism. Thus far, there are 60 ratifications of universal legal instruments against terrorism, and seven new ratifications of the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism (Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Grenada, Guyana, Dominican Republic, and Uruguay).

This program also prepared several technical assistance tools, such as the "CICTE Manual for the Prevention, Repression, and Suppression of Terrorism Financing" in 2006, then updated in 2007. Other such working documents cover

the following subjects: (i) universal and inter-American anti-terrorism legal frameworks; (ii) anti-terrorism financing, its sources, and current high risk threats; (iii) non-profit organizations and the financing of terrorism, written in collaboration with CICAD in June of 2011.

A decade of expanding cyber-security capacity

Since adoption of the “Inter-American Integral Strategy to Combat Threats to Cyber Security” in 2004, our cyber security program has been actively involved in the promotion and development of our cyber security capacity. One decade ago, our work revolved around raising awareness among member states about the importance of cyber security. In the last five years the program has been stressing the creation of Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs). This work has increased the number of CSIRTs in the Americas from six to 18 in the last decade. The program also helped Colombia, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago formulate policies and national strategies on cyber security. A mobile laboratory was created to conduct cyber security crisis management exercises. The laboratory has been used for training activities in six countries. These three efforts helped consolidate the capacity to respond to both national and regional cyber threats.

Additionally, important partnerships with the private sector and civil society were consolidated, and cooperation agreements were signed. For example, we signed a cooperation agreement with the worldwide awareness campaign “Stop. Think. Connect.,” which seeks to raise awareness among internet users about cyber security dangers. We also signed the World Economic Forum’s Principles for Cyber Resilience, which provides assistance to institutions to adapt the appropriate principles on cyber security.

The Industrial Control Systems program (ICS) was created in 2014. Under this program, work was done with member states to strengthen the industrial control systems that regulate the critical infrastructure of countries, such as internet connection systems controlling transportation networks, water purification plants, medical facilities, financial systems, and many other essential services. Direct advisory services are also being given to member states. For example, the President of Colombia and his Minister of Defense recently asked us to do an intensive week-long intervention to assess Colombia’s current cyber security protocols, its institutional structures, and the legal systems, and to make recommendations for improvements. Through CICTE, we met with a group of cyber experts from around the world to assess the situation in Colombia, exchange ideas, and collaborate to prepare a set of solutions and recommendations.

5- The Inter-American Defense Board

In 2006, three years after adoption of the Declaration on Security in the Americas, the Statutes of the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB) were amended. This change led the Board to become an “entity” of the OAS, because it more precisely established the terms under which policymaking for the Board was to be done, and democratized the election of its officers.

Since then we have worked harmoniously with the Board, which has cooperated with us on issues of responding to natural disasters, defense books, and others. However, sufficient mechanisms have still not been generated to allow the Board and the Inter-American Defense College to adapt to new realities. On the contrary, the debate about the “Inter-American Defense System” and the entities it should consist of, has still not concluded—aside from the fact that the Conferences of Defense Ministers of the Americas (CDMA) is, without a doubt, the center of this new era.

The effective adaptation of the agencies under us to the new situation in the hemisphere continues to be imperative. Cooperation has sidelined the hypothesis of conflict, and in this cooperation, the armed forces—acting in multidimensional ways—now operate bilaterally or multilaterally in various areas. But there is no hemispheric organization in charge of such cooperation, and no international legal framework to regulate it.

Our opinion has been expressed on other occasions, in terms of transforming the Inter-American Defense Board into an Inter-American Defense Committee in which all states that wish to participate may do so. With clear and transparent statutes and rules, such a Committee would be specifically oriented toward the principles of solidarity and cooperation enshrined in the Declaration on Security in the Americas, and fall under the Conferences of Defense Ministers. We would not see this as another Committee of the Permanent Council, but rather a structure such as CICAD or CICTE, with its own leadership body and also a Chair or Secretariat fully tied to the General Secretariat of the OAS. We hope that this proposal can be considered in a future debate, so that the architecture for multilateral cooperation in this field can be identified.



OAS Humanitarian Demining



OAS General Secretariat Building

XI- NEW AND TRANSPARENT MANAGEMENT

Administrative Modernization

This decade's tasks began in the midst of a severe financial crisis, organizational crisis, and, above all, a crisis of confidence that affected the Organization. That embarrassing situation was so extreme that upon leaving his position as Acting Secretary General, Luigi Einaudi described it in the following terms: "Unfortunately, though our structure is renewed, our finances are still in disrepair. It is as though our great ship had no maintenance for its engines and nothing more for sails than patchwork rags fit for an aging catamaran. Even with the savings achieved by the restructuring process, and even if existing quotas are paid in full and on time, income does not meet minimal operating requirements." Even more directly, the Secretary of Finance informed us, some days later, that the Organization's income would probably not be enough to cover the salary bill for October of that year.

Einaudi had made great efforts to keep the ship afloat, given that the level of arrears in the member states' quota payments had reached 50%, the budget was shrinking year after year due to the freeze on quota income, and the basic infrastructure continued to deteriorate. The number of staff officers was therefore falling in an anarchic fashion, determined only by the required cutbacks, while mandates and demands continued to proliferate.

Financial constraints on the Organization's Regular Fund forced a search for alternative funds. Although this enabled the Organization to survive, at the same time it multiplied the number of mandates, tasks, and demands and created a "parallel" OAS of officers paid for with external funds and often subject to different employment and accountability rules. That situation ultimately provoked a crisis in the organizational structure and responsiveness of the Organization, in that it had created a series of self-sustaining windows that were unlikely to obtain high-impact results in the region.

The fragmentation of activities and mandates without guiding principles or standardized management led to a crisis of confidence, which was exacerbated by the lack of communication between the political bodies, the officers, and those responsible within the Secretariat, and by the difficulties of consolidating a new leadership within the General Secretariat. Each group individually sought to

guarantee the legitimacy of the institution, using isolationism, micromanagement, and the juxtaposition of roles.

The decentralization of decision-making had, in turn, caused an inability to coordinate activities politically and financially. The result of this process had turned the OAS into an organization in which each part survived independently.

To dismantle the high level of decentralization in the decision-making process and eliminate isolationism, in late 2005 we embarked on the gradual reconstruction of the Secretariat's organizational structure in order to reflect in ever-increasing detail the relationship between the decision-making structure, the functions of the programmatic areas, and the statutes of its different component agencies and areas. That process concluded in 2008 with the current organizational structure, which represents an effort to move away from the decentralized structure without functional or hierarchical correlations that we had inherited.

The working areas were divided into Secretariats and Departments. These carry out the activities and pursue the goals indicated by the mandates, which are in turn classified according to the Organization's current pillars. This organizational structure is based on hierarchical decision-making, with horizontal integration on crosscutting issues such as gender or human rights, and vertical integration in a chain of decision that goes from the office chief up to the Secretary General.

This organizational structure was kept flexible to address the changing reality of the Organization's challenges, and the adjustments to it were published in successive budget documents and on the OAS web page. Since 2013, the web page has also contained a continually updated database with detailed information on the personnel assigned to each organizational unit, indicating the adjustments made to respond to the existing mandates.

Also in 2005, the Department of Planning and Evaluation was created, which is charged with developing and accompanying strategic and operational planning efforts and with providing technical support for the selection, monitoring, and evaluation of projects and programs. Similarly, in 2006, we began the practice of adopting Annual Operating Plans covering the entirety of the General Secretariat. These plans are drawn up on a yearly basis by each area and working team, and they indicate the activities and objectives of the General Secretariat and the distribution of personnel and funds within it. This plan serves as the foundation both for the program-based design of the budget and for the management strategy used for regular and specific funds.

The creation of a Department of Planning and Evaluation allowed the establishment, in 2006, of a mechanism to standardize the presentation, selection, and monitoring of projects and programs. Those were previously managed

on a decentralized basis, without uniform standards or indirect cost coverage. Programs arose from negotiations between the donors and recipients, with accountability mechanisms specified according to each donor and without any correlation to general objectives. The activities derived from the use of those funds had no control mechanisms other than those of the different areas, which managed their own funds without centralized distribution mechanisms. A Project Evaluation Committee, made up of the area secretaries and persons in charge of the autonomous entities and chaired by the Secretary General, in turn became the instrument for the standardization of the project life cycle. From relevance to evaluation by way of the standardization of technical quality, this Committee is the body that enables the selection and relevance of the Organization's activities to be influenced.

For managing the funds and in order to increase efficiency, coordinate funding to avoid duplications, align priorities with donors' specific demands, and simplify and standardize project management methods within the General Secretariat, in 2006 we devised a fund design and implementation strategy using two different approaches: the "country funds" (Canada and Spain) and the "basket funds" (MAPP, IACHR, CIM).

In 2007 we instituted a mechanism for indirect cost recovery in project management (known as ICR). Prior to this there was no policy for covering those costs, and the Regular Fund was ultimately subsidizing activities financed by external donors. In the best-case scenario, the negotiated overhead, if any, remained in the corresponding areas, which were not responsible for the expenses incurred by the General Secretariat in carrying out the programs. The implementation of an ICR policy, which is also regulated by the political bodies, led to a new type of funding for the personnel involved in activities of that kind throughout the General Secretariat.

As a result of all these additional competences given to the OAS, as of 2007 its proposed budget is drawn up by identifying, classifying, and costing the operational goals of the entire General Secretariat and the other agencies of the OAS, and by correlating them to the human and material resources allocated in both the specific funds and Regular Fund. Beginning in 2013, the budgets presented for the following years include several chapters dedicated not only to the identification of goals, but also the expected outcomes, according to the resources allocated to each pillar, sub-pillar, and mandate group.

Many of these important changes in the structure of the General Secretariat would not have been possible without the developments attained within it, during the same period, in the area of information and communications technologies. In

2005, no administrative procedures that involved user interaction had yet been computerized. At present, all such procedures are carried out digitally. In 2005, there was no dedicated computer-based application for the Organization's non-administrative activities. At present, all the secretariats – with the support of the Department of Information and Technology Services, which we also created – have developed programs, some of which have received international accolades (IACHR, secure network, CICTE, simulators, DPE program management, etc.). In that context, we also launched a program for the computerization of projects, from design to monitoring, which provided us with a new and dynamic project database. In addition, all travel transactions are conducted using computers, which ensures transparency and instantaneous reporting.

One of our main objectives in this area was to increase the transparency and accountability of the Secretariat. For that, the existing control instruments were strengthened and the reporting capacity, both physical and digital, was expanded.

The first level of accountability is the institution's structure for governance, which is the responsibility of the political bodies. The second level includes the regulations governing the operations of the Secretariat's different areas (personnel, budget and finance, country offices, etc.) and is set out in rules of procedure, executive orders, administrative memos, and directives. This framework, which is the responsibility of the Secretary General, is regularly updated and assessed.

At present, the reporting system covers almost all the General Secretariat's activities. It covers, in both digital and printed form, not only management documents – generated by the Secretariat for Administration and Finance – but also periodic reports and bulletins issued by the Secretary General and the Organization's different areas.

In particular, we have included in this system such elements as the following:

- A quarterly report system;
- Up-to-date information on the web page, under the heading *Accountability*, with exhaustive data on human resources, the budget, auditing, evaluations, contracts, and strategies;
- Regular reports (six-monthly, annual, and multiannual) for donors;
- Results-based external evaluations, by programs and by areas;
- Annual evaluation by an external auditing firm;
- Annual evaluation by the Board of External Auditors;
- Periodic reports of the Inspector General to both the Permanent Council and the Secretary General;

- Bulletins and publications, both digital and printed, from the line areas, reporting activities and achievements;
- Results-based budget, including activities to be carried out and achievements to be attained in each area of the Organization;

The General Secretariat's accountability capacity is today greater than at any previous time in the history of the OAS. Today we can display, in real time, not only the current state of the General Secretariat's budget, but also the budget status of each of its projects.

The external auditing firm has never presented a "qualified" opinion: all its findings throughout the duration our Administration were "clean." The Board of External Auditors has made an invaluable contribution to identifying the Organization's financial problems, and has invariably delivered constructive recommendations and emphasized the need to choose between reducing the OAS's mandates or increasing the countries' quotas. The reports of both bodies have always been public.

APPENDIX

- A Strategic Vision of the OAS - Second Presentation, April 2013
- Report on the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Presented by the Secretary General, April 2007

APPENDIX I

A STRATEGIC VISION OF THE OA SECOND PRESENTATION

José Miguel Insulza

I- INTRODUCTION

Just over one year ago, I submitted to the Permanent Council a document entitled "A Strategic Vision of the OAS" for consideration by the member states. The principal purpose of that document was to trigger a dialogue that would lead to a better definition of priorities in the work of the Organization. It sought, therefore, as its Introduction pointed out, to respond to a common demand of the member states "that we work more efficiently as the premier forum for discussions on the hemispheric issues that constitute the essence of the Organization."

Systematic discussion of the contents of that document is still pending. There was, as everyone will recall, a prolonged debate lasting several months on the methodology for analyzing it, which prevented progress on the substance of the matter. The delay stems from the fact that the dialogue proposed is complex, because it involves forging consensus around the visions, interests, and intent of a mixed group of dissimilar countries. If there are too many mandates in the OAS and it is therefore necessary to establish priorities, it is because at some point those mandates were approved by the member states and were, and continue to be, very important for them.

However, one year later, and after the latest and difficult budget debate, which once again was reduced to an exercise in making numbers add up, with scant reference to policies, in my opinion the discussion on matters of substance can no longer be postponed. As I said at the Special Session of the General Assembly, held at the end of last year, we cannot keep on saying that we will do it next year; this is NEXT YEAR and it is essential that decisions be taken. At the last meeting of the Permanent Council in 2012 the subject was brought up once again with a view to an effective discussion of the issue in the first few months of 2013.

This paper supplements the Vision presented last year, with a particular emphasis on the political aspects, which I regard as the core aspects in today's

debate. Although I repeat certain ideas, I have tried to add elements to them that justify their description as a “vision,” while refraining from putting forward partial solutions or magical recipes. In that I am guided solely by my intention to orient the discussion in the Council through ideas that are always open to debate and subject to your approval or rejection.

II- BACKGROUND

In recent months, numerous opinions have been publicly voiced regarding the OAS. Many of them contain criticisms that we would do well to take into account in order to improve our performance. Some points of convergence (not yet, I would say, points of consensus) have also emerged that are worth analyzing in detail.

1. The Ongoing Relevance of the OAS

The debate about whether the OAS is still relevant has taken on fresh impetus, above all since the emergence of new regional organizations and communities, some of which are presented as “alternatives to the OAS.”

Today, regional organizations play a central role that the hemispheric Organization cannot cover alone. Economic integration is happening not in the Hemisphere as a whole, but rather in the various subregions. Latin America and the Caribbean grew in the first decade of this century more than they had grown in the 1980’s and 1990s combined, and for that reason, they, too, aspire to a place in the concert of nations.

Nevertheless, I do not believe that regional bodies can be regarded as genuine alternatives to a hemispheric organization if that organization has a clear notion of its true missions.

UNASUR is a long-awaited regional body, bringing together the countries of South America, in much the same way as the Central American Integration System (SICA) or CARICOM have done for the countries in those areas, starting several years prior to UNASUR. Especially when it comes to integration, America is a continent of regions, and the stronger those regional processes are the better the outlook for development for the countries in those regions.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) is a forum for political dialogue among the countries of those two regions, geared to

strengthening their presence and actions in international scenarios and engaging in dialogue with other parts of the world. Although at one time, it might have been preferable for those activities to have been part of a hemispheric endeavor, the truth of the matter is that, for some of the players involved, especially in North America, there was never any desire to coordinate policies at that level. In fact, CELAC broadens what already existed in the United Nations, namely the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), and it does not encroach on the activities of any other hemispheric body.

The existence of these organizations does not, therefore, pose a challenge to the OAS. The real challenge as far as legitimacy is concerned comes from within the Organization and from the will of its member states.

Now, more than ever before, there exists a Hemispheric Agenda, which includes a set of items that concern the Americas as a whole and that cannot be addressed in isolation by just some of the member states. Like the IDB, ECLAC, and other hemispheric bodies, the OAS justifies its existence because of the existence of strong, vigorous, and, generally speaking, sound relations within the inter-American system.

A number of facts and reasons explain the existence of a common hemispheric agenda:

- a) For instance, trade statistics point not just to an important volume of trade between North America and the rest of the Hemisphere; they also show balanced trade relations. The United States continues to be, by far, the leading foreign investor in Latin America. Several of our countries are, in addition, key providers of most of the natural resources needed in the Americas and our diverse mineral and environmental wealth allows us to be highly optimistic about the future.
- a) We are increasingly bound together, moreover, by demographic, cultural and social ties that shape our agenda. Nobody can think of migration, for instance, without reference to the hemispheric framework, given that most migration is still from South to North. The United States is now the third largest Latin country, after Mexico and Brazil, and the Latin contingent is only going to get bigger in the coming decades.
- a) Our countries have coexisted in peace for over a century and, for the first time since independence, all of them are home to effective democracies, even though undoubtedly they can be perfected. Never before have we shared so many values in the political sphere. America today is one of two democratic continents in the world.

Nevertheless, we also have a region that is more diverse than it was, in terms of the size of its members, their history and wealth, and the aspirations of

those countries in the concert of nations. These developments have generated much more self-esteem in the countries of the region, inducing them to act with greater autonomy: an important factor to take into account. Self-determination has been a principle proclaimed in the OAS Charter from the start, but it is easier to call for now when all the member states have governments legitimized by the sovereign will of their peoples. Representing that diversity of actors and interests, while maintaining unity among them all, poses an enormous challenge.

We do indeed need a common agenda, because the issues of democracy, human rights, trade, migration, and crime continue to be hemispheric in scope. However, we cannot address them in the same way as we did several decades ago. The hegemonies of old are now neither useful nor acceptable, as President Barack Obama pointed out at the Fifth Summit of the Americas. "I don't want to make policies for you, but with you." That common agenda is the first great challenge for today's OAS and one that, unfortunately, is still pending.

The OAS Charter itself clearly states that all independent American states that ratify it are members of the Organization and that imposes on us the obligation to be inclusive. We want all independent countries in the Americas, the 35 states, to be members of the Organization and to feel comfortable in it, to feel that they own it.

To that we have added, since 2001, the commitment to democracy. This is an obligation that has to do with our domestic policies, but it is one that all the countries of America freely assumed, thereby converting that form of political organization into a condition for staying in the system.

An inclusive organization, made up of sovereign, diverse countries legitimized by democracy, working on an equal footing to advance the same hemispheric agenda, is what the OAS stands for in the 21st century; an organization very different from the one imposed on us by the Cold War.

2. Continuity and Change in the Inter-American System

It is a mistake to think that because the OAS is the oldest international organization in the world it is reluctant to change. On the contrary, if our Organization (the continuation of the Pan American Union) has lasted so many years through so many changes in the region and in the world, it is because of its capacity to adapt to new circumstances. Faced with new circumstances, the OAS has not remained anchored to the past. Rather, it has generated new proposals at every stage and forged new institutions, such as the Pan American Health Organization and the Inter-American Commission of Women in the first half of the last century, or the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in 1959. At the same time it has developed one of the world's richest bodies of law. The

OAS is the depository of more than 200 international treaties and 6,000 bilateral cooperation agreements, making it the guardian of all the important laws in effect in the Hemisphere. That is one of its principal strengths.

Our hemispheric organization has undergone several changes:

- a) The first major shift was, of course, the transition from Pan American Union to Organization of the American States (OAS) in 1948. As the Cold War began, the first pillar of the new system was the signing of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty) in 1947, followed, in 1948, by the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (the first declaration on this subject in the world, months before the Universal Declaration), the Pact of Bogota on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, and the OAS Charter. All these instruments far surpassed the obligations and designs of the Pan American Union and they shaped the initial years of the OAS, in which external defense became paramount, to a point at which it was invoked to legitimize interference in the internal affairs of states, thereby transgressing the Charter itself.

Nevertheless, that framework also ensured that our Hemisphere became the most peaceful since the Second World War and, at the same time, the region that submitted most cases to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. This demonstrates that we solve our disputes through legal means, negotiation, mediation, and arbitration or by resorting to the ICJ.

- b) The OAS shifted course again at the end of the 1950s, when it attached more importance to development issues, which had been postponed in 1948. Although the Alliance for Progress is often highlighted as the fundamental change in this regard, the truth is that the Inter-American Development Bank was founded before the Alliance and it was established within the OAS framework. It provided an ingredient that had been missing since 1948 and was now right at the forefront. The IDB, which "was more than a bank," as Felipe Herrera liked to say, would subsequently expand further into the great institution we all know today.
- c) A decade and a half later, the OAS again adapted to new circumstances, this time with respect to human rights. The Commission on Human Rights received only a brief mention in the OAS Charter, when its main task was first seen as "promoting" human rights. However, in the face of the dictatorships in South America and the civil wars in Central America, "defending" human rights became a more pressing and important concern. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Commission on Human Rights took on a much more central role than it had played hitherto, giving rise

to a system that included the American Convention on Human Rights. Nobody had imagined that the Commission on Human Rights would turn out to be what it in fact became and surely almost no one had envisaged the existence of an American Convention on Human Rights, the Treaty of San José of 1969, or the establishment of a Court whose jurisdiction was mandatory, all of which would expand the scope of our human rights activities.

Thus, the human rights pillar of our Organization remained, but, like the development pillar, too, its nature had changed.

- d) With the end of the Cold War, the politics pillar also changed. That was the upshot of many other factors, including the entry into the Organization of a set of new member states (Canada and the Caribbean countries), which brought with them fairly robust democratic traditions and convictions; the democratization of South America; and the end to the civil wars in Central America, all of which helped shape this new environment.

Without neglecting the major issues of peace, peaceful settlement of disputes, self-determination, and non-intervention, the OAS also immersed itself in the core issue of commitment to democracy. Starting with Resolution 1080, adopted at the General Assembly session held in Santiago, Chile, in 1991, the Charter was amended through the Protocols of Managua and Washington, which some countries have still not ratified, supplementing changes agreed to in the Protocol of Cartagena de Indias of 1985.

All this would eventually lead to the signing of the Inter-American Democratic Charter in 2001, in which democracy ceases to be a merely rhetorical aspiration and asserts itself as a commitment among sovereign states: "The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it," reads the first article of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

- e. Finally, with respect to security, there was another major shift, which would practically set aside or marginalize collective security instruments vis-à-vis external threats in favor of a multidimensional approach favoring cooperation to confront internal threats posed by drug trafficking and organized crime, along with other hazards such as pandemics and natural disasters.

The Rio Treaty philosophy had inspired the overthrow of Arbenz in Guatemala, the suspension of Cuba, the invasion of the Dominican Republic, and

the silence that greeted the coups d'état in Chile, Argentina, and other countries. But times changed and the 1982 war in the South Atlantic triggered a crisis from which that philosophy would never recover. The instruments still exist, but the Rio Treaty subsists only formally and external security issues are now much less important in the Organization today than they were when those instruments were drawn up in 1947.

The 2003 Special Conference on Security, held in Mexico, also took up the security challenge and managed to change the system. Even before it, the establishment of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), and, later on, the establishment of the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security all forged a more promising approach to tackling today's challenges. The agreements reached at the last, Sixth, Summit of the Americas on combating drug trafficking and organized crime are now the main focus of this pillar within the OAS.

In short, despite the talk of "continuity" in the "pillars" of the Organization, the contents beneath the headings have changed substantively and we have transformed the Organization much more radically than is sometimes recognized. The inter-American system's strength has not been sapped. Rather it demonstrates its ability to adapt to new circumstances.

3. Political Dialogue Should Guide Administrative and Financial Issues

Political dialogue about how to adapt our Organization to meet current demands is an arduous task that has been systematically avoided in favor of debate focusing almost exclusively on specific topics relating to administrative and budgetary management, rather than an in-depth discussion of what we want from this Organization. How to improve management and maximize the use of resources is naturally an important and necessary part of the debate, but that concern does not justify eluding discussion of the deeper issues at stake. That has led to strategic matters being addressed from an administrative and budgetary angle, thereby precluding conclusions based on a medium and long-term vision.

We need to stop addressing partial symptoms while postponing decisions on the root causes. Reducing discussion to administrative and budgetary topics, to a point at which there is even mention of administrative paralysis, a term that is false and harmful to the OAS, leads us to imagine that by resolving such matters we will somehow breathe new life into the OAS. That just lets us continue to avoid a strategic dialogue, based on a long-term vision, which would enable us to seek agreement on the major hemispheric issues and refine consensus on what the member states expect from their hemispheric Organization.

Moreover, the problems with the Organization's finances are nothing new and have been analyzed many times. When I took over the OAS General Secretariat

there was talk, just as there had been in previous decades, of a “terminal crisis.” I still remember Luigi Einaudi’s remarks when he passed on to me the duties that he had discharged with such efficiency and self-sacrifice at a time of political difficulty.

“Unfortunately, though our structure is renewed, our finances are still in disrepair. It is as though our great ship had no maintenance for its engines and nothing more for sails than patchwork rags fit for an aging catamaran. Even with the savings achieved by the restructuring process, and even if existing quotas are paid in full and on time, income does not meet minimal operating requirements. The human rights system has been under-funded for years, but the sad truth is that today, not merely the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development, but all areas of the Organization, from Human Rights to Security, Democracy and support for the political bodies and for the Offices in the Member States, lack adequate resources.”

Luigi Einaudi knew what he was talking about, having spent many years at the Organization, variously as a senior State Department official, Permanent Representative of his country, and Assistant Secretary General. His analysis was correct then and remains so today: without money to repair the engines or change the sails, the ship’s headway will become increasingly labored.

That analysis also concurs with the conclusions of our Board of External Auditors, with the auditor of the Department of State at its head. Every year, the Board advises the Permanent Council to adopt decisions with a view to achieving one of two things: either increase the contributions from member states, or reduce the areas in which the General Secretariat works. In recent years I have presented very clear proposals to the Permanent Council on those two courses of action.

The 2013 program-budget was negotiated in such a setting devoid of any discussion of the core issues. Effectively, the result was another reduction, which will inevitably translate into dismissals of staff. That has become a trend now, because 13 Regular Fund positions were eliminated in 2010, 45 in 2011, 18 in 2012, and now 22 more in 2013, bringing the total number of staff members down from 547 to 449, an 18% cut in just the last four years. At the same time, paradoxically, expenditure is still structured in such a way that key activities of the Organization continue to be largely paid for out of voluntary funds. Take, for example, electoral observation; the work of the Inter-American Commission and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights; the missions to resolve political crises, such as the one to Paraguay; the study on drug trafficking requested by the Presidents in the framework of the Sixth Summit of the Americas; and others. In spite of everything, the OAS is not in an economic crisis and we are still in time

to halt the attrition caused by mounting costs without a corresponding rise in income. The OAS has neither a budget deficit, nor outstanding debts. There is no emergency; however, there is a pressing need for rationality that we cannot put off any longer.

III. POLICY PROPOSAL

I believe that there is broad agreement on two fundamental premises to guide our work. If we could start by ratifying those two premises, we could then build our operational plans on them:

- A.- The reform that we need involves a straightforward choice: i) if what is wanted is to continue the work that the Organization currently does, then a programmed increase in the amount of resources available is needed; ii) if there is no appetite to increase quotas, then it is essential to scale back the activities that the OAS carries out. Of course, one option could also be a partial increase in funding, combined with a more moderate scaling back of activities.
- B.- If it is decided to focus the activities of the Organization more narrowly, then that should be done leaving intact, where possible, the work connected with the four pillars of the institution: political (democracy and conflict resolution), human rights, integral development, and security (in particular, public security).

These two positions are set out in the first Strategic Vision document. What follows is intended as a complement to that text.

1.- Increased Funding

Increasing funding would require reviewing and raising the quota assessments scale, which has only happened twice in the past decade, and then only very slightly. Therefore, assuming that there is no appetite to make concerted increases of a particular magnitude, I have proposed two paths:

- a) A resolution that would make it possible to raise the quotas in an amount equivalent to the cost-of-living increases that the OAS has to make whenever the salaries of its employees go up in line with the United

Nations cost-of-living adjustment. This proposal would not increase the amount of funds available for new programs; however, it would at least stop the resources of the OAS from declining annually in real terms, as has been happening almost invariably for nearly three decades, precluding the need for further lay-offs.

- a) A change in the quota assessments structure whereby the country that puts up the largest contribution (United States pays for 60% of the regular budget) continues to pay the same amount, but that amount would be equivalent to only 49% of total, while the other member states would increase their contributions to make up the remaining 51%.

A number of other ideas have also recently emerged about how to bring in more resources without increasing countries' contributions. One such is to resort to private contributions, especially from charities, foundations, or NGOs that engage in activities similar to those of the OAS. I believe that an initiative of this type could serve for a number of ancillary activities, such as the Museum of the Americas, the Columbus Memorial Library, or actual charitable work performed by the Pan American Development Foundation, the Young Americas Business Trust, or the Trust for the Americas. However, in my opinion, seeking private funds to finance work on our core pillars is both inappropriate and unlikely: This is an organization of states and, as such, it should be capable of financing its own work. Furthermore, I cannot conceive of activities such as protection of human rights, electoral observation, drug abuse control, or implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter being privately funded.

The second idea is to increase the size of the voluntary specific funds in a number of respects. In this regard, I recently suggested that the Oliver Jackman Voluntary Capital Fund to Finance the Inter-American Human Rights System might be expanded through a special contribution from member states, and that permanent observer countries might also be invited to do likewise in order to help contribute to a larger and stable source of funding for the Inter-American Commission and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. While it would be hard to imagine specific funds for all activities, I believe that in areas such as human rights or scholarships, it would be feasible to consider contributions of this nature.

Another idea that was mooted some time ago, which I would like to repeat now, is the creation of two separate observer categories, acknowledging the reality that some of our current observers contribute substantively to OAS programs, while others limit themselves to a minimal presence. Hence the talk of a special category of so-called "associate members," which would be countries from

other regions willing to commit to a more permanent kind of support or a specific contribution, reserving the category of "observer" to those with a more limited involvement.

2. Rationalization of functions:

If the Organization's revenue is not increased in one of these ways, or in any other that the member states care to propose, the only other option would be to concentrate the Organization's work areas, reducing the many mandates from the General Assembly and the Summits of the Americas in line with certain policy approaches agreed upon by the member states.

A year ago, in my "Strategic Vision," I proposed two specific approaches:

1. To allocate Regular Fund resources exclusively to carrying out our core tasks, and with respect to other activities that the member states might wish to entrust to the Organization, create specific funds in each instance to finance them.
2. To examine the content of each task to determine if the OAS is the organization best placed in the inter-American system to carry it out, and if not, identify potential opportunities for partnership with other agencies of the system in order to implement them, allocating our resources in a more efficient and rational manner.

The rationale for the first of these approaches is well known. For a long time the OAS has been the central organization of the inter-American system to which all the sectoral proposals that our governments make for cooperating in different fields are addressed. That much is reflected in the large number of ministerial meetings that we serve as permanent secretariat. However, it has also given rise to the Organization's own decentralized bodies that answer neither to the General Assembly nor to the Permanent Council, but which we must, nevertheless, house and finance. The proposal is to review the effective ongoing validity of those agencies; in other words, to determine if they still enjoy the support of the relevant ministries in each member state, and examine with them possibilities for setting up special funds to finance their work without overburdening the main OAS budget.

Preliminary talks have already been held with defense ministers about the Inter-American Defense Board, with port authorities about the Inter-American Committee on Ports, and with the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission, among other bodies. However, those discussions were only very partially reflected in this year's budget and we must consolidate our policy in that regard.

The second approach proposed entails recognizing that the prioritization of mandates at the OAS depends not only on the importance of those mandates in absolute terms, but also on the possibility of their making a significant contribution. It will be impossible to reduce anything without applying this approach. No one could argue that a program on preschool education or water management is not important – that would be absurd. The real question lies elsewhere: Does the work of the OAS in this area make a difference? Is it of significant use to member states?

When we consider the general thrust of the statements made by most member states, we find an apparent consensus that the so-called “pillars” constitute the Organization’s core tasks: political (peace and democracy), human rights, development, and security. However, this formula is too broad and if the aim is to harness the concept, a more profound analysis of each pillar is needed in order to make it practicable.

When we explore further in this direction we find that perceptions of how useful the OAS is vary considerably and are a direct function of the interests of whoever is performing the analysis. Thus, for some, the Organization’s credibility depends on our capacity to respond to threats to democracy, while, for others, its credibility depends on what it can do in cooperation for development. For some, the yardstick is the Organization’s performance in the defense and promotion of human rights; for others, its efficiency in combating drug trafficking, or its ability to improve citizen security. The fact is, in order to be seen in a positive light, the OAS will have to respond to some—mutually agreed upon—extent to all those demands, and, for that too, consensus is needed.

For that reason, it is essential that we engage in a political dialogue that may lead to conclusions that can definitively determine which mandates the Organization must pursue as priorities, just as we agreed to do during the last approved change to the procedures and schedule for discussing the “Strategic Vision.” If we succeed in that, then it will be possible to implement a strategic allocation of our human and financial resources in line with the consensus achieved.

The purpose of this exercise, therefore, will be to try and reach areas of consensus regarding the best way, now, to achieve the goals of the Organization in the 21st century. To my mind, it should include:

- a) Ratifying the strategic decision to concentrate the work of the areas on the four pillars defined above.
- b) Setting a timetable for agreeing, with each of the institutions that depend on other agencies, the elimination of their

financing from the Regular Fund. The role that the member states would like the so-called "decentralized bodies" to play should be determined as soon as possible. We are referring here to the Inter-American Defense Board, the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission, the Inter-American Committee on Ports, the Pan American Development Foundation, Trust for the Americas, the Inter-American Children's institute, and the Art Museum of the Americas. The fact that almost all of these bodies originated in different legal instruments and are governed by ministerial meetings outside the structure of the Organization should be taken into account in the analysis.

Such an agreement could include other forms of material assistance that the OAS could continue to provide them, to the extent that their main funding would come from other sources

- c) Concluding the current mandate prioritization exercise and beginning another stage in which each would be screened according to three key questions: (i) Does it correspond to any of the pillars of the OAS's work? (ii) Is the work that the OAS does in each area useful and relevant for the member states and/or for the OAS to function properly? (iii) Do other institutions of the inter-American system perform work in similar areas and, if so, on what level?

The dialogue on these issues should include very precise questions by which to set clear priorities, such as:

- a) Does the work of the OAS in a specific field really make a difference?
- b) Can the OAS do the job on its own or are strategic partnerships needed?
- c) Are the tasks performed by the OAS consistent with the national interests of the majority of its member states? In other words, are they on the hemispheric agenda?

In the first document, I proposed a path to follow in this regard when I suggested that we should concentrate on our defense of democracy and promotion of good governance; strengthen our inter-American human rights system, for which there is no credible substitute; keep in mind the issues of institutional and human development in relation to the mandates that we have

been assigned by the Summits of the Americas; and give priority to public security as the core theme of our multidimensional activities in the area of security.

Democracy

Much work has been done in this area in recent years. At its last three sessions, the General Assembly adopted resolutions on the subject of monitoring implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the member states engaged in a dialogue to assess implementation of that Charter in the 10 years since it was adopted. As a result of that dialogue, specific topics were identified in which member states have not yet reached agreement on how to act collectively. There is, therefore, a basis for further work in this field.

There is, moreover, a chance in the short term of focusing on efforts to move toward a definition of what constitutes an "alteration of the democratic order," other than traditional coups d'état. Discussion of this specific issue, without reference to any particular case, would, if consensus is reached, substantially enhance the capacity of the OAS to react in this very important field.

Human rights

As regards human rights, we are in the final throes of a fruitful dialogue on strengthening the inter-American system. Very specific measures have been discussed in an inclusive and open process that has resulted in significant progress. The member states have identified, with ample participation by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and civil society, a series of concrete matters in which improvements can be made either to procedures or rules so as to enhance attention to victims of violations, and specific recommendations have been made with respect to each of those matters. All that remains to be done in this area, then, is to continue improving by adopting the appropriate decisions.

Development

More precise and efficient work can be done with respect to development. Efforts are scattered over a wide range of projects with relatively little funding.

It is also apparent that we have not managed to focus sufficiently on what we do best, that is to say on institutional and human development projects.

To be successful in this area, a major effort needs to be made to ensure that regional or hemispheric objectives are negotiated and aligned with national interests. The objectives of eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, and overcoming marginalization in order to achieve integral development are regarded as core goals by most of our member states. Other central objectives

have to do with scholarships, trade and competitiveness.

Development is probably the area where most dialogue is needed with other agencies of the system, in order to identify the real hemispheric priorities and decide on what roles each agency could fulfill, thereby avoiding overlaps

Security

Citizen security is clearly an area in which the demands placed on our Organization are both increasing and insistent. The counterdrugs mandate received from the Heads of State of the Americas at the Summit of Cartagena confirms the priority of this issue. When taken in conjunction with the recent decision to transfer to the OAS leadership of the mandates on organized crime assigned by the same summit, that responsibility confirms that public security is now a central objective and will require the allocation of renewed efforts and resources to it on the part of the OAS.

IV. CONCLUSION:

We have, then, reached a watershed as far as the future of the Organization is concerned. As it has on several previous occasions, only to be postponed, the time has come for the OAS to adapt to the demands of the present. That much is evident to us all. That is why at the end of 2011, in keeping with my responsibilities as Secretary General of the institution, I presented a document entitled "A Strategic Vision of the OAS," in the hopes of stimulating a process of dialogue and change. That did not happen and the situation has grown, if anything, more complex.

Therefore, I see it as my duty to persevere with my aims and submit for the consideration of the member states a second document containing many of the publicly and privately expressed views that I have gathered over the past year about the state of the OAS. Once again, I hope to trigger a process of political dialogue that will enable us successfully to tackle the challenges that the OAS faces for the 21st century. I pledge my efforts to that goal.

However, for that to happen, it is essential that the member states agree that the time for difficult decisions has come and that they bend themselves to the task. As I have said before, I realize that it is no easy undertaking but it is unavoidable, so let us jointly embark on this journey into the future.

Appendix II

THE INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER

[Report of the Secretary General pursuant to resolutions
AG/RES. 2154 (XXXV-O/05) and AG/RES. 2251 (XXXVI-O/06)]

Review of Action Taken and Considerations for the Future

This report is in response to a mandate from the General Assembly, issued in resolutions AG/RES. 2154 (XXXV-O/05) and AG/RES. 2251 (XXXVI-O/06). Those resolutions ask the Secretary General to submit a report to the Permanent Council on how the Inter-American Democratic Charter has been implemented since its entry into force. They also instruct him “to devise proposals for timely, effective, balanced, gradual initiatives for cooperation, as appropriate, in addressing situations that might affect the workings of the political process of democratic institutions or the legitimate exercise of power, in keeping with the provisions of Chapter IV of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, with respect for the principle of nonintervention and the right to self-determination, and to present those proposals to the Permanent Council.”

Both mandates demonstrate the importance member countries of the Organization attach to compliance with the standards and principles contained in the Inter-American Democratic Charter, as well as their conviction of “the need to provide the Organization with procedures that facilitate cooperation in complying with the standards and principles contained in the Inter-American Democratic Charter, so that it may contribute effectively to the preservation and consolidation of democracy in the countries of the Hemisphere”.

Pursuant to that instruction, the General Secretariat presents this report, which elaborates on the ideas set forth in the consultations held with the Permanent Council on September 22, 2005, in the Annual Report to the General

Assembly in Santo Domingo, in June 2006, and at the special meeting of the Permanent Council in September 2006. On those occasions, some of the concepts set forth here were addressed, especially those relating to limitations on plans to monitor the situation of democracies, as called for in the Charter, and the real possibilities of action by the Secretariat in crisis situations.

This report is intended to fulfill the full mandate of those two resolutions, examining the main concepts included in the IDC's definition of democracy; the resulting mandates to the different bodies of the OAS; how they have been met; and some reflections on the future of the IDC.

1. Our Objective: A Democratic Hemisphere

Debate over the content of democracy is as old as the concept itself, and I may say at the outset that I have no intention of reopening such debate here. That is unnecessary, in any case, because in the text itself the member states have settled the debate over the requirements they wanted to include in its definition of democracy. Quite apart from the legitimate theoretical questions, its meaning for the countries of the Americas is very clear in the wording of the IDC.

In effect, after proclaiming in Article 1 that peoples have the right to democracy, the IDC (in Article 2) defines representative democracy, the rule of law, and the constitutional system as the foundations of democracy, adding that this representative democratic system is strengthened by full and responsible citizen participation within a framework of law and constitutional order.

The IDC then includes as essential elements (in Article 3) respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, access to power and its exercise under the rule of law, the holding of periodic, free, and fair elections based on secret balloting and universal suffrage, the pluralistic system of political parties and organizations, and the separation of powers and independence of the branches of government.

Article 4 completes the idea of democracy by citing, as components, transparency, probity, responsible public administration, respect for social rights, and freedom of expression and of the press, while also insisting on the subordination of all to civilian authority and the rule of law.

The concept of democracy in the IDC is both broad and demanding, and includes a priori requirements in the very formation of a democratic government, as well as a series of attributes it calls "essential" or "fundamental" for the exercise of democracy, referring to the "republican" / form of government, characterized by the effective democratic rule of law, independence among the branches of government, a pluralistic party system, a transparent and accountable government, and subordination to legitimate authority. It also includes respect for the fundamental rights of the citizens (universal suffrage and secret balloting, human rights, freedom of expression, and citizen participation). The importance of the issue of political and civic citizenship in the IDC is highlighted by its insistence on issues such as participation (Article 6), human rights (Articles 7 and 8), elimination of discrimination (Article 9), and full and equal participation for women.

But the IDC also proclaims "social citizenship," whereby democracy and economic and social development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing; it then holds that poverty and illiteracy, among other social ills, negatively affect the consolidation of democracy, and commits governments to promote and observe economic, social, and cultural rights and to respect the rights of workers.

This proclamation of "social citizenship" is an especially important aspect of the IDC, in a Hemisphere in which poverty still afflicts some 40% of the population, and extreme poverty around 20%, with a high degree of inequity in the distribution of wealth; a Hemisphere where many citizens face discrimination for reasons of race, gender, or other factors; where there are high levels of illiteracy and lack of access to social services. Building democracy, then, also means building social citizenship in a region where workers' rights, enshrined as they may be in the books, and even in some constitutions, are often not respected in practice.

In the vision of the IDC, social citizenship is not an essential, defining requirement of democracy; but without it democracy loses force, credibility, and support among our peoples. Social and economic development are not part of democracy; but if democracy does not promote them, it can become a lifeless form of organization divorced from the daily reality of our peoples—and, in the final analysis, from the aim we posed at the beginning of this chapter: building a democratic Hemisphere.

In short, the IDC includes in its definition of democracy its democratic origin, the fundamental organization of the state, and full political, civil, and social citizenship. For that reason, we have said many times that, in order to be considered democratic, a government must not only be elected democratically but also govern democratically. /

2. The IDC in Action

The Inter-American Democratic Charter has been recognized as the most complete inter-American instrument enacted to date for promoting democratic practices in the states of the Hemisphere and pursuing the cooperative activities that are needed in cases where performance is clearly not up to standard.

It is also the instrument to which governments of the member countries of the Organization may turn, if they face threats to their democratic institutions or the legitimate exercise of power, to use diplomatic channels and good offices, at all stages of the process of resolving risks to, or the breakdown of, democratic institutions.

Nevertheless, although it has become the hemispheric benchmark for the preservation of democracy, when the Democratic Charter has been put to the test in existing or potential crisis situations, it has revealed some limitations as to its legal, operational, and preventive scope.

After defining the principal features of democracy, it is logical that the Charter should concern itself with defining its main application mechanisms. For this, however, we must look beyond the Democratic Charter: Chapter IV applies only in cases of democratic crisis or threatened crisis. It contains no indication as to how the democratic process in member countries should be monitored in light of the IDC, nor does it offer any guidelines for monitoring and promoting the values of the IDC.

The IDC must not be viewed as applying solely to action in crisis situations. On the contrary, it was conceived also as an instrument for objectively monitoring and assessing progress in the democratic process in the Hemisphere, and for promoting cooperation in strengthening democratic governments. What has happened is that both the monitoring and the promotion of democracy are placed in the hands of the General Secretariat, which must report on them to the Permanent Council and the General Assembly. On the other hand, in crisis situations, it is the Council that, on its own initiative or at the request of a country or the Secretary General, must adopt the main decisions required.

In this light, it is appropriate to examine the IDC in the following three dimensions: (a) monitoring the situation of democracies; (b) promoting democracy; and (c) applying the Democratic Charter in crisis situations.

2.1. Monitoring

Several member countries have indicated, especially in the lead-up to the General Assembly session in Fort Lauderdale (2005) and on the fifth anniversary of signature of the IDC (2006), the need for mechanisms for periodic evaluation of the status and quality of democracies in the Hemisphere. On the second occasion, the Government of Peru formally proposed, for example, that the Secretariat create a voluntary evaluation mechanism whereby countries that so wished could subject themselves to a peer evaluation of their compliance with the precepts of the IDC.

However, no resolution has been adopted on monitoring the progress of democracy in light of the Democratic Charter, except for the one asking the Secretary General to present a report on the issue.

In this area, the member states have the final word; if they consider it possible to implement a self-evaluation mechanism, the General Secretariat will take the steps needed to implement that decision. Nevertheless, I must advise the Council that, according to the consultations I have conducted, on which I now report to the Council, many member countries believe that any evaluation of the condition of democracy in a given country not performed by that member state itself would run counter to the principle of nonintervention enshrined in the OAS Charter.

On the other hand, there is another evaluation alternative, which we have been employing in some areas. This involves periodically evaluating the behavior of the different countries with respect to each constituent element of democracy, as identified in the IDC.

As examples of this form of monitoring:

- a. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) delivers reports on different countries every year, as well as an annual report to the General Assembly on the human rights situation in the region.
- b. The IACHR also uses special rapporteurs to evaluate other aspects of the IDC relating to human rights, such as freedom of expression; the rights of women, indigenous peoples, and people of African descent; and the status of persons deprived of freedom.
- c. The Mechanism for Follow-Up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption examines compliance with its rules in each of the 28 signatory countries,

issues its evaluations, and seeks to cooperate with them in resolving their most severe problems.

- d. The Inter-American Commission of Women monitors compliance with the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women..
- e. At its first meeting, the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities agreed also to monitor compliance by member countries with their obligations under the Convention.
- f. The Secretariat for Political Affairs conducts ex-post evaluations of electoral processes and systems in member countries, through its electoral observation missions, carried out in accordance with the standards of the IDC (Chapter V). In the coming months, that Secretariat will deliver a report on all the elections held in the region over the last year.
- g. The Department for the Promotion of Democracy, now part of the Secretariat for Political Affairs, produced reports in 2005 on election financing in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- h. The Protocol of San Salvador on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights requires states parties to present reports on progressive measures they have adopted to guarantee due respect for those rights. It has not been possible as yet to present such reports, because member states have not agreed on a mechanism for doing so, despite the mandate from the General Assembly.

As an alternative, then, to the idea of mechanisms for the global evaluation of democracy in member countries, it seems much more feasible and practical to evaluate the different traits of democracy covered in the IDC. With this approach, it would be possible to perform multilateral evaluations, or to apply other mechanisms agreed between states to areas not yet considered, such as political parties or judicial systems, rounding out this evaluations grid.

A procedure of this kind would have three clear advantages:

First, it would eliminate any suspicions of intervention that the pretension of "evaluating democracy" in a general way might arouse.

Second, it is consistent with what we think the OAS should be doing to strengthen the condition of democracy: promote international cooperation over imposition, complaints, or sanctions. Multilateral evaluation would allow us to work with countries in each of the areas where there are shortcomings, with cooperation programs designed to correct those shortcomings, and to advance democracy in its concrete aspects.

Third, it would enlist the participation of civil society, of which some of the more important organizations are moving precisely in the areas to which these evaluations refer. In fact, on questions of human rights, gender issues, and discrimination, and in the MESICIC process, civil society participation has been extremely useful.

2.2. Cooperation

In this area, the General Secretariat has done some significant work, based on the fundamental features of the Democratic Charter. Most of our cooperation activity in the political area is devoted to strengthening those aspects of promotion and prevention that flow from the Democratic Charter. They represent, therefore, an important contribution to the process of consolidating democratic solidarity, and the IDC serves as an essential tool in defining them.

a. Electoral observation

The IDC not only considers periodic, free, and fair elections based on universal suffrage and secret balloting as one of the essential elements of democracy, but also devotes Chapter V to electoral observation missions.

The number of democratic elections held in recent years, especially in the last 18 months, has generated very intensive activity for the electoral assistance and observation units. In particular, we might mention:

- Initiatives to enhance transparency, efficiency, and credibility in electoral processes and agencies, through technical assistance programs with the electoral authorities of various member countries.

- Electoral observation missions: over the five years that have elapsed since adoption of the IDC, the OAS has fielded more than 40 electoral observation missions in 19 member states. In 2006 alone, we mobilized more than 900 observers to cover the following elections: Bolivia (Constituent Assembly); Costa Rica (special mission, presidential and legislative elections); Nicaragua (presidential and regional/Atlantic coast); Colombia (presidential and legislative); El Salvador (municipal and legislative); Peru (presidential and municipal/regional); Dominican Republic (legislative); Mexico (special mission, presidential); Guyana (parliamentary); Saint Lucia (parliamentary); Ecuador (presidential); Panama (referendum); and Venezuela (presidential).

b. Crisis Prevention and Special Missions

In this respect, it is important to recall the dispute settlement and negotiation efforts in which we have participated; we look back over recent months with the satisfaction that there has been no interruption of any presidential mandate, in contrast to what seemed a frequent occurrence in Latin America prior to mid-2005. While in some of these cases the IDC was invoked to resolve problems, in fact it was cooperation and dialogue promoted by the General Secretariat that in all cases was the primary factor in preventing confrontations and breakdowns of the institutional order.

In addition there were the following efforts:

- Strengthening the Organization’s institutional capacity to identify and analyze situations that could affect democratic institutional and political processes in the region, through:
 - o Development of a methodology for multiple-scenario analysis that takes account of the region’s characteristics to enhance our crisis prevention capacity.
 - o Training of personnel of the Secretariat for Political Affairs to strengthen analytical and technical capacities for use in implementing this methodology.
- The holding of regional seminars designed to strengthen and promote the institutional role of the OAS in preserving democratic governance in the region.

c. Support and strengthening of political parties

Here we might point to:

- The creation in 2001 of the Inter-American Forum on Political Parties (FIAPP).
- During 2005, the FIAPP pursued national technical assistance projects, projects on the gender perspective and women's political participation, and an agenda for reform and institutionalization of political parties and the generation of knowledge. In particular:
 - Support for the National Constituent Assembly process in Bolivia.
 - International observation of the formation of a Supreme Court of Justice in Ecuador.
 - Actions in support of dialogue and political reform sponsored by the Program for Democratic Values and Political Management in Guatemala.
- The FIAPP cooperated with women's ministries in Central America to discuss affirmative action measures, the adoption of quotas within political parties, and political training.

d. Promotion of democratic governance

The Secretariat for Political Affairs designs programs and activities to support member states in implementing public policies to strengthen state modernization and studies on the major challenges to sustainable democracy and the exercise of democratic citizenship in the Hemisphere.

In addition, to ensure compliance with Article 27 of the Democratic Charter, which cites the need to promote governance, good management, democratic values, and the strengthening of political institutions, the SPA is working to strengthen the commitment of OAS member states to decentralization and local governance as essential facets of democracy-building. This activity includes:

- Political dialogue and consensus-building among domestic stakeholders in decentralization policies.
- Dialogue between member states of the High-Level Inter-American Network on Decentralization, Local Government and Citizen Participation (RIAD).
- The study of government decentralization policies.

For its part, the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI), pursuant to Article 4 of the IDC, and in the spirit of promoting the modernization of public institutions and making them more efficient, more transparent, and more participatory through the use of new technologies, has engaged in the following principal activities, through its departments:

- Training of 2,000 public officials in electronic government, since 2002, and consolidation of the Network of E-Government Leaders in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Support for municipal modernization through the Efficient and Transparent Municipalities Program.
- Financing of 92 development cooperation projects.
- Strengthening of interparliamentary cooperation within MERCOSUR.
- Creation and implementation of a Political Training School for Women in the Dominican Republic.
- A study of educational and social factors in the political socialization of young people and children, culminating in publication of the report "Strengthening Democracy in the Americas through Civic Education" and various outreach activities.
- The Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices, providing opportunities in (i) research, (ii) professional and educational resource development; and (iii) information exchange.
- Development and adaptation of an online course in English for teaching democratic values and practices, for teachers in the Caribbean.

e. Promoting citizenship

Programs on civil registry have taken on great importance for the Organization, with successful experiences in Haiti, Honduras, and Paraguay. The Organization is now ready to conduct a more ambitious program to comprehensively address shortcomings in many countries in terms of birth records and the civil registry, so as to guarantee the right of identity for all citizens of the Americas.

f. Human rights

The activities of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights as a whole relate directly to democratic governance in the Americas, in the terms stipulated in Articles 4 and 5 of the IDC, on the essential elements of representative democracy and of the exercise of democracy. Consequently, and since the full observance of human rights is indispensable for the democratic rule of law and for democracy, the Inter-American Commission's promotion and protection of these rights is a direct contribution to democratic governance in the Americas.

For fulfilling its role, the system has a number of instruments, including:

- On-site visits to member states of the Organization.
- Hearings on the overall situation of human rights or specific human rights topics.
- The system of individual cases and precautionary measures.
- Publicity for matters that require the attention of the international community.
- Reports on specific topics.
- Recommendations to states relating to their obligation to respect and guarantee human rights.

The Commission has created rapporteurships for specific topics and specialized units, including those on women, indigenous peoples, migrant workers and their families, the rights of the child, the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, and the Human Rights Defenders Unit. Those rapporteurs and units engage in studies and promotional activities, prepare reports, and visit countries—all important contributions to democratic governance in the Americas.

The Inter-American Democratic Charter also recalls that the elimination of all forms of discrimination, particularly discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, or race, and of various forms of intolerance, as well as the promotion and protection of the human rights of indigenous peoples and migrants and respect for ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity in the Americas, contribute to strengthening democracy and citizen participation. From this perspective, the topical rapporteurs are working for full social integration of traditionally marginalized sectors as an essential way to build democratic governance.

g. Freedom of the press and expression

Freedom of expression and of the press is considered in the IDC as one of the fundamental components for the exercise of democracy. It is clearly essential to guarantee adequate political participation, effective inclusion of various sectors of the population, and democratic control over the action of government. The freedom of expression allows people to form their own political opinion, to compare it with those of others, to decide freely whether they will support one position or another within the political spectrum, and to take informed decisions on matters that concern them.

The situation of freedom of expression in the region continues to present significant problems. There has certainly been important progress in recent years, but there are still problems and obstacles to full exercise of the freedom of thought and expression in our region, which we must address. It is essential that states promote legislative reform and implement policies to guarantee all citizens the full and effective exercise of the freedom of thought and expression and broad access to public information. These measures include strict prohibition of prior censorship, the elimination of contempt (desacato) laws, and the distinction between public and private persons in determining potential liability for the release of information of public interest. Assassinations, attacks, and threats against journalists must also be carefully investigated, and those responsible prosecuted. Without doubt, the work of the Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression is very important in this area, and we must reinforce and support that work.

The road to improved democracy can only be trod through greater participation by society in addressing problems common to all citizens, through mechanisms that include the full exercise of the freedom of thought and expression.

h. Discrimination

The IDC affirms that the elimination of all forms of discrimination, especially gender, ethnic, and racial discrimination and the various forms of intolerance, contributes to strengthening democracy and citizen participation. It calls for the necessary promotion and protection of the human rights of indigenous peoples and migrants, and respect for ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity in the Americas.

Today in the Organization we are working to establish various international instruments that will set down very clear rules against discrimination, and that will also help member states to adopt domestic legislation against discrimination and intolerance.

For example, we have a Working Group to Prepare a Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. There is also a Working Group to Prepare a Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006-2016). We recently created the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities. There is a work plan for the rights of migrant workers, in which various areas of the Organization have committed themselves to adopt measures in this regard.

The Organization's Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has established a Special Rapporteur on the rights of people of African descent and on racial discrimination; this is an important initiative, because very few cases of racial discrimination are brought before the Commission. In this respect, we should note that, in the great majority of our documents, there is no explicit reference to people of African descent, who constitute the largest minority group subjected to discrimination. Consequently, this is a very important emphasis to make in preparing the Inter-American Convention against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance—also being discussed in another working group.

This is a topic we must address very seriously. There is no doubt that the majority of people in our Hemisphere have suffered discrimination at some time. The problem can only grow, despite our efforts, unless we focus directly on key ways to eliminate it. If we are successful in preparing and adopting these instruments and having their provisions adopted into the domestic law of states, we will be helping to create fairer and more caring societies in our Americas. This issue is closely related to democratic governance and consolidation of the rule of law, because they presuppose fostering a culture of inclusion, equality, and tolerance among our peoples, promoting equality, and eliminating all forms of racism, discrimination, and xenophobia.

i. Gender

By means of Article 28 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the OAS has adopted the question of full and equal participation by women in the political structures of the countries as a fundamental element in the promotion and exercise of a democratic culture. In pursuit of this mandate and the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality, the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) of the Organization of American States (OAS) is promoting women's participation in the various political structures of member states, through multiple initiatives detailed in the Annex to this report.

j. Probity

Consistent with Article 4 of the IDC, which declares that “transparency in government activities, probity, [and] responsible public administration ... are essential components of the exercise of democracy,” the Office for Legal Cooperation of the Department of International Legal Affairs has been serving as Technical Secretariat of the Mechanism for Follow Up on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on Corruption (MESICIC). This mechanism was adopted by states parties on June 4, 2001, during the OAS General Assembly session. The work of the MESICIC Technical Secretariat has facilitated progress in the bodies that make up the mechanism, namely the Conference of States Parties and the Committee of Experts. The first body held its second meeting in November 2006; the second has successfully held its first eight meetings.

2.3. The IDC in times of crisis

The mechanisms contemplated in Chapter IV of the IDC refer to the essential features of Article 3, representative democracy, the rule of law, and the presence of a constitutional regime. A reasonable interpretation is that open and repeated violations of human rights or other fundamental guarantees should be addressed within these concepts.

The criticisms most frequently leveled against Chapter IV speak of “vagueness” in the terms used and a lack of “precision” in the criteria for defining when and to what extent a country’s democratic institutions have been altered. They also point to the obvious tension between the principle of nonintervention and the possibility of protecting democracy through collective mechanisms. Finally, they mention problems of access for those seeking to avail themselves of the IDC’s mechanisms.

The first point has sparked a number of initiatives outside the Organization to define more precisely those situations that seriously affect democratic institutions. An example of these initiatives is found in the speech by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, given at the inauguration of the Lecture Series of the Americas, in January 2005, in which he summarized the basic criteria presented by the political scientist Robert Dahl in developing the notion of “polyarchy,” to propose a definition of the concept of “unconstitutional alteration or interruption” of the democratic order, which, in his judgment, must include:

1. Violation of the integrity of central institutions of the state, including the weakening or inaction of reciprocal checks and balances governing the separation of powers;
2. Elections that do not meet minimal international standards;

3. Failure to hold periodic elections or to abide by electoral outcomes;
4. Systematic violations of basic freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of association, or respect for minority rights;
5. Unlawful termination of the term in office of any democratically elected official by another official, elected or not;
6. Arbitrary or unlawful appointment of, removal of, or interference in, the service or deliberations of members of the judiciary or electoral bodies;
7. Interference by nonelected officials, such as military officers, in the jurisdiction of elected officials;
8. Use of public office to silence, harass, or disrupt the normal and legal activities of, members of the political opposition, the press, or civil society. /

Without going into detail on this proposal here, I want to indicate that, in my opinion, it goes generally in the right direction. If the IDC does not clearly define what constitutes an alteration or interruption of the institutional order, it would be appropriate for the Permanent Council or the General Assembly to do so by means of a definition of this kind, thereby bringing much greater certainty to application of the Democratic Charter. If the principal asset to be safeguarded is democracy, how can we do so without clearly defining when and how it is imperiled?

On the second point--the obvious contradiction between the principle of nonintervention and the possibility of collective action in the face of a specific situation in a member country—sharing the opinion of some experts on the inter-American system, we might argue that, far from being a contradiction of principles, this actually reflects the inherent tension at the heart of the Organization.

The OAS Charter itself prohibits all states from intervening “directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State,” and affirms, later on, that “every State has the right to choose, without external interference, its political, economic, and social system and to organize itself in the way best suited to it”. How can we reconcile this language with Chapter IV of the IDC, which provides for means of collective action when a clearly “internal” matter threatens or interrupts the democratic process?

The answer, as we see it, is in Article 1 of the IDC, which declares that democracy is a right of peoples and an obligation of governments. The OAS acts in defense of those rights. Those who intervene illegitimately are those who threaten to subjugate the people, not those who act to defend them.

Owing precisely to the need to ensure this compatibility, the IDC refers to these mechanisms solely in cases of serious interruption or disruption of

democracy. Furthermore, even this sanctioning process does not authorize the OAS to act against the offending state--only to make diplomatic approaches and, in extreme cases, to suspend it from participation in the Organization, a penalty already provided in Article 9 of the OAS Charter.

In adopting the Inter-American Democratic Charter, member states were not introducing any new principle or purpose into the OAS Charter. On the contrary, they were reaffirming something already in force. It is the recognition that representative democracy is indispensable for the region's stability, peace, and development, and that it is possible to promote and build representative democracy without violating the principle of nonintervention.

The "graduated response" component of these forms of action is essential to the work of the OAS. It makes possible the design of ways for the Secretariat and the Permanent Council to act to prevent crises and, even when they erupt, to move step-by-step to prevent their escalation.

This component has introduced mechanisms and processes for assessing and analyzing politically the severity of the situation and developing graduated responses, consistent with the level of the crisis, in order to restore the integrity of democratic institutions or prevent their breakdown.

In this context, particular importance attaches to the contribution of the OAS General Secretariat as the Organization's source of technical and analytical support for member countries as they seek to maintain peace and the stability of democratic systems. The same holds for the political work of the OAS Secretary General in support of member states, and his function as the appropriate political channel for informing and providing support to the Permanent Council in generating initiatives to deal with a crisis that may emerge. Hence the importance of strengthening the capacity of the General Secretariat to assist member states in pre- and post-crisis responses that include monitoring, negotiation, dialogue, and political agreements, in addition to national reconciliation and strengthening political institutions, parties, and organizations and civil society.

As a preventive instrument, our action must include collective analysis and assessments, within the competent bodies of the OAS, of the social and political situation in the country; diplomatic initiatives; and international cooperation in the prelude to and early stages of a crisis.

The sanctions tool is used only when diplomatic means have been exhausted and a breakdown of democratic institutions in a member state is imminent. Even in this case, it is preceded by diplomatic steps taken by the Secretary General, on his own initiative (Article 18), or by the Permanent Council (Article 20), which may go so far as a special Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

The third point of criticism is perhaps the most obvious in the content of the IDC: restricted access for those seeking to invoke the Democratic Charter

when they consider democratic institutions to be threatened or to have been undermined.

In effect, there are only three channels of access to the Democratic Charter: (i) "when the government of a member state considers that its democratic political institutional process or its legitimate exercise of power is at risk ..." (Article 17); (ii) when the Secretary General considers that situations have arisen in a member state that may affect the development of its democratic political institutional process or the legitimate exercise of power, (Article 18); or (ii) when in the event of an alteration of constitutional order in a member state, any member state or the Secretary General requests the immediate convocation of the Permanent Council (Article 20).

But we must note that all three channels lead to the Permanent Council; this is the body that must decide whether the situation merits the adoption of declarations or the convening of the Meeting of Ministers. The Secretary General may act directly, under Article 18, to arrange visits and other actions, but only with the consent of the government concerned, and he must report on his action to the Permanent Council. Another state can act only when a disruption of institutional order has already occurred, and it must also lay its position before the Permanent Council.

Consequently, the IDC, in practice, does not provide a clear route for action, except when the state affected by the upheaval so requests or consents, thereby safeguarding to the maximum the principle of nonintervention. A recent case where the IDC was used in this way occurred in Nicaragua, in June 2005, when the President of the Republic asked the Secretary General to head a mission in the face of what he saw as an imminent threat to his legitimate exercise of power from elements of the opposition. The Secretary General went to Nicaragua, then reported to the Permanent Council, and carried out a successful internal mediation effort.

But, in practice, at this time no branch of government other than the Executive can really invoke the IDC to prevent a breakdown of democracy. Much less, for example, can civil society organizations do so. Naturally, if the Executive itself is threatening democratic institutions, in the judgment of the other branches, it can be blocked only by the Permanent Council once the rupture has occurred.

There was also a recent case in point in Ecuador, in December 2004, when the President of the Republic decided to dissolve the Supreme Court of Justice. Despite calls from that country for the OAS to make the Government recognize the gravity of dissolving a branch of government, this did not occur. When the Ecuadorian Congress removed President Lucio Gutierrez, the OAS took no special action. It was only in April 2005, at the request of the new President of Ecuador, Dr. Alfredo Palacios, that the OAS sent a mission to investigate the problem of

vacancy in the Ecuadorian Judiciary. None of the routes seemed open for the OAS to consider preventive action; nor was the issue brought before the Permanent Council.

The IDC was equally ineffective in Venezuela in April 2002, when the OAS was unable to prevent the coup against the constitutional President, or to produce any resolution on the rupture of democracy before the country returned to normal. There was a resolution invoking the IDC in general terms, dispatching a special mission, and convening a special session of the General Assembly, but it was adopted only after the President returned to power. On April 18, the General Assembly adopted a declaration supporting democracy in Venezuela.

However, the Democratic Charter was fully applicable in this case, under Article 20, since there had already been an obvious interruption of the constitutional process. It was not the IDC that failed here: it was the Council's delay in taking a decision that prevented this event from going down in history as the first effective application of the IDC.

Nevertheless, it seems clear that we must broaden the means of access to the mechanisms of the IDC. Along these lines, I want to propose what seems to me the simplest form. While the expression "government" used in the IDC has been interpreted as meaning the "Executive," the truth is that "government" must be understood as referring to all the branches of state. It is natural, then, that the other branches of government of a country should be able to turn to the OAS, citing the IDC, to denounce the disruption or breakdown of democratic institutions in their country. As always, it will, of course, be up to the Permanent Council to determine whether the complaint is valid. But the effectiveness of the IDC seems seriously limited when only the executive can use it to defend a democracy.

3. The Future of the IDC

Throughout this report, I have put forward various options for enhancing the effectiveness of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. In summary, the main proposals are as follows:

- 3.1. Strengthen the monitoring mechanisms available to the General Secretariat by extending the forms of multilateral evaluation to each of the features the IDC deems essential to the existence and survival of democracy.

- 3.2. Expand the capacity of the General Secretariat to foresee and prevent crises that threaten seriously to alter or interrupt democratic processes in member states.
- 3.3. Reach a formal political consensus, through a resolution of the General Assembly, on what situations may be identified as serious disruptions or interruptions of the democratic process.
- 3.4. Produce periodic reports, if possible annually, on the main issues defined as essential for democracy in the IDC.
- 3.5. Reinforce the capacity of the General Secretariat to assist member states before and after crises, including monitoring, negotiation, dialogue, and political agreements, as well as national reconciliation, the strengthening of political institutions, parties, and organizations and of civil society, and the supremacy of civilian power vis-à-vis the military.
- 3.6. Expand access to the OAS, for requesting action by the Council, to all branches of member governments.

Still, the future of democracy in the Hemisphere and the role the IDC can play in it will depend crucially on the way we handle certain areas, especially those where our action to date has been very incomplete.

We have increased our capacity to prevent institutional disruptions; in the holding of clean and free elections; we have been effective in resolving crises; we have well-earned prestige in human rights; and we have taken great steps on issues relating to transparency and probity. But we still have far to go to meet the principal challenge of ensuring democratic governance and sustainable democracy on a permanent basis--the *raison d'être* of the IDC.

Democracy is a value that must be preserved; at the same time, it is a set of procedures and institutions that can always be improved, and of human rights and civil rights that must be extended and protected.

Of the 14 cases involving interruption of presidential mandates that have occurred over the last decade, none was the direct result of objections to electoral procedures. Our goal is not only that governments be properly elected and kept in office; it is also that citizens feel they live in a democracy that addresses public problems and improves their lives, and that the democratic form of government be a permanent process in the Americas, the only way of handling and resolving conflicts in society.

In terms of the first chapter of this report, we may say that, while there is growing compliance with the IDC with respect to the inception of democracy, there remain important shortcomings in our Hemisphere in the separation,

independence, and reciprocal control of the branches of government, and in full respect for the three spheres of citizenship: political, civic, and social.

Our future task is to strengthen the force of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, extending its monitoring and the cooperation surrounding it, and addressing in particular those areas that are weakest, but without abandoning those where we have already gained important ground and strength.

Consequently, I would like to add to the previous five proposals the following ones:

- 3.7. Maintain and strengthen the role of the OAS as the principal agency of electoral observation and promotion in the Americas.
- 3.8. Expand OAS action substantially in terms of strengthening democratic institutions, respect for the rule of law, and the independence of the Judiciary.
- 3.9. Strengthen republican institutions and the democratic rule of law. While democratic shortcomings are more acute in the civic and social spheres, we still have serious political problems. One of these needs to be resolved urgently: the weakness of our republican forms of government, whether these involve presidential, parliamentary, or constitutional monarchy systems. The republican system and democracy are mutually reinforcing. The first creates the conditions for the second to grow. Without a republic, democracy has no underpinnings. And we all know that, in many cases, there are serious weaknesses in the separation, independence, and reciprocal control of the branches of government -- the basis of republican organization.

Consequently, when I think about expanding and developing the Democratic Charter, I also think about expanding and consolidating republican organization. The separation and balance of powers, a legislative branch endowed with its own political and technical capacity, a professional and fully independent judiciary; clear limits on the exercise of power; clear and stable rules for the democratic process; strengthening of political parties -- these are some of the elements of the democratic rule of law we want to strengthen.

The republican form of government also attaches particular importance to mechanisms of citizen oversight. A democracy without accountability will inspire little confidence, and it is in the lack of confidence that most of today's crisis of representation has its roots.

It is important to highlight the role civil society can play here, as in other aspects of expanding and strengthening democracy, in bringing to light those areas of public action that are still nontransparent or presenting substantiated complaints about shortcomings in probity.

- 3.10. Extend application of the IDC in terms of expanding civic citizenship, which has not been sufficiently considered, and which by all accounts lies at the root of the institutional instability of recent years. The Democratic Charter is addressed to people, who, in addition to exercising their unrestricted right to elect their governors, develop as human beings and as citizens through the full exercise of their recognized rights.

To achieve democratic stability means giving effect to the principles set forth in Article 1 of the Democratic Charter: "The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it".

The Report on the State of Democracy in Latin America, presented by the UNDP in 2004, put this another way, equally succinct but powerful: the subject of democracy is not the voter but the citizen.

This tells us that democracy is essential for translating political, civil, and social rights from the nominal to the real. And it also reaffirms the obligation of our governments to promote and defend democracy. Here is the heart of the matter, the central challenge towards which we must direct the expansion of the Democratic Charter: how do we give effect to this right to democracy, and how do we give specific content to the obligation of governments?

- 3.11. Adopt the Social Charter of the Americas as a way of promoting social citizenship and strengthening democracy.

This means that the expansion of the Democratic Charter must be consistent with two of its own principles:

Article 12: "Poverty, illiteracy, and low levels of human development are factors that adversely affect the consolidation of democracy."

Article 13: "The promotion and observance of economic, social, and cultural rights are inherently linked to integral development, equitable economic growth, and to the consolidation of democracy ...".

To ensure the future of democracy and the role of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, our countries require structural changes for the sake of

sustainable democracy, and these must include a frontal attack on the prevailing social inequality of our societies.

In this context, I reaffirm the importance of moving forward in the substantive areas mentioned in the remarks on the Fifth Anniversary of the IDC, namely, prompt adoption of the Social Charter, to implement Chapter III of the Democratic Charter; prompt completion of our Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; negotiation of the Inter-American Convention against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance; and substantive strengthening of the work of the Inter-American Commission of Women.

Some programs under way in the General Secretariat, such as those on civil identity, consumer protection, and access to justice, are part of the same task of cooperation to generate social citizenship, which we must address as a priority.

These actions, designed above all to strengthen the preventive aspect of this hemispheric instrument, will make an important contribution to democratic solidarity, with the IDC as an essential tool.

I want to conclude by reaffirming the principal criterion that guides our action: a progressive approach to applying and interpreting the IDC. Success in a matter so complicated and sensitive must be built step by step. In a multilateral system based on consensus, there is no other way to proceed. Of course, gradualism does not preclude the occasional bold stroke needed to introduce the necessary changes; but it does govern the timing of such audacity.

We must also take the gradual approach in expanding the sphere of the Democratic Charter. Both the strengths and the weaknesses of multilateral systems lie in their dimension and complexity. The decision of 34 states carries enormous weight in the Hemisphere; but the important thing is to recognize how difficult it is for so many parties to build that decision. This difficulty must be borne in mind when new elements are introduced. Expanding the sphere of application of the Democratic Charter requires us to understand that constraint and adjust our pace accordingly.

Finally, there is institutional gradualism. The necessary corollary to broadening our challenges is expanding our institutional capacity and improving and modernizing our Organization. We must never demand of an administrative system more than it can give at each stage of its evolution. Every new initiative, in order to be put into practice, must have the necessary institutional conditions in terms of OAS financial, human, and organizational resources.