

**INTER-AMERICAN PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL
LAW**

(Resolution adopted at the seventh plenary session, held on June 5, 1997)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN:

The Charter of the Organization of American States, Article 3 of which declares that "international law is the standard of conduct of States in their reciprocal relations";

The Declaration of Panama on the Inter-American Contribution to the Development and Codification of International Law [AG/DEC. 12 (XXVI-O/96)], in which the General Assembly declares "its renewed and most staunch commitment to continue promoting the progressive development and codification of inter-American international law in the framework of the Organization of American States as a suitable way to strengthen relations of peace and solidarity among the states of the Americas, with full respect for their sovereignty and the principle of nonintervention," as well as "its interest in promoting the broadest possible awareness of the inter-American legal system," and its decision "that the Permanent Council, through its Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs, promote procedures for more effective cooperation and coordination among the various bodies of the Organization on legal matters";

The working document entitled "The Law in a New Inter-American Order," presented by the Secretary General and considered both by the Permanent Council and by the Inter-American Juridical Committee; and

The document "Legal Cooperation: A Tool for Enhancing the Inter-American Legal System," presented by the Secretary General to the Permanent Council at its meeting on April 30, 1997;

BEARING IN MIND the work in which the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States has been engaged in this area; and

CONSIDERING:

That the Permanent Council, at its meeting on July 11, 1996, transmitted to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs for study the Declaration of Panama on the Inter-American Contribution to the Development and Codification of International Law;

That the multilateral treaties adopted within the framework of the Organization of American States constitute a valuable legal heritage that must be preserved and given wide dissemination;

That dissemination of this subject matter among the political bodies of the OAS facilitates the study, discussion, negotiation, and development of new legal instruments within the framework of the inter-American system;

That it is important to disseminate legal studies of the inter-American system; and

That cooperation to promote the development, dissemination, and teaching of international law in the inter-American context is an indispensable undertaking,

RESOLVES:

1. To adopt the Inter-American Program for the Development of International Law:

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The member states of the Organization of American States, within the framework of the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the Organization and bearing in mind the Declaration of

Panama on the Inter-American Contribution to the Development and Codification of International Law [AG/DEC. 12 (XXVI-O/96)], have decided to adopt the Inter-American Program for the Development of International Law, implementation of which requires the following actions:

Treaties in the Inter-American Context

- a. To encourage the development of an Inter-American System of Legal Information, which will be accessible via the Internet and provide ready access to the complete texts of inter-American treaties of which the OAS is the depository and data on the current status of signatures, ratifications and/or accessions, reservations, objections, declarations, and the date of their entry into force, and to background information and preparatory documentation thereon, as well as to similar information on cooperation agreements concluded by the OAS and on inter-American treaties of which the General Secretariat is not the depository.
- b. To instruct the General Secretariat to coordinate, through the Secretariat for Legal Affairs, the work under way in other areas of the General Secretariat, in other bodies of the Organization, and in the various agencies and entities of the inter-American system, with a view to strengthening the Inter-American System of Legal Information, in consultation with the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs of the Permanent Council.

Legal Development within the Organs of the OAS

- c. To systematize the resolutions and declarations of the different organs of the OAS and the action plans and other studies and documents approved within the framework of the Organization with a view to facilitating the study, discussion, negotiation, and development of new agreements within the framework of the inter-American system.
- d. To request the General Secretariat to ensure close coordination among the various areas and offices and other bodies of the OAS so as to move forward with the activities described in the preceding paragraph.

Teaching of Inter-American International Law

- e. To strengthen the Course on International Law conducted each year in Rio de Janeiro by the Inter-American Juridical Committee and the Secretariat for Legal Affairs by including sessions on the latest developments in international law and the major political agreements relating to the new hemispheric agenda.
- f. To organize, in cooperation with institutions in the various member states, courses at the subregional and national levels on the various aspects of inter-American law, in particular, on the latest legal developments within the Organization, so as to provide the opportunity to diplomatic agents, teachers of international law, academics, judges, members of the armed forces, and other senior public and institutional officials to be aware of legal and political developments within the OAS and to discuss them.
- g. To provide its staunchest support to the activities described in the preceding paragraph, in particular by encouraging the participation of senior OAS officials and international jurists and specialists and by offering scholarships and/or apprenticeships in legal practice and research to outstanding participants.
- h. To hold meetings of professors of public and private international law from the member states to share ideas and proposals for action. At these meetings, consideration could be given to preparing a handbook or other teaching materials, organizing workshops or refresher courses, and developing future links with appropriate academic institutions with a view to achieving the systematic incorporation of inter-American law into the curricula of the various faculties of law.

- i. To hold periodic Workshops on International Law with the participation of high-level jurists and specialists in international law and of legal advisers from the foreign ministries of member states in order to further the study and development of legal issues in the inter-American system.
- j. To take into account the need to include topics and representatives from the various legal systems in the Hemisphere in all the activities mentioned above.

Publications

- k. To encourage the publication of such texts as the amended Charter of the OAS and inter-American treaties adopted during the past decade.
- l. To promote regular publication of the Inter-American Juridical Bulletin so as to cover the major activities of the OAS in the legal area, including, in particular, information on new treaties adopted within the inter-American system, and the corresponding signatures, ratifications and/or accessions, reservations, and declarations, *inter alia*.
- m. To resume the publication of the Inter-American Juridical Yearbook in order to reintroduce a forum for the dissemination of expert doctrine on various aspects and topics relating to current inter-American law and new developments in the framework of the new hemispheric agenda.
- n. To prepare a systematic and updated work on the institutional framework and legal aspects of the inter-American system to mark the 50th anniversary of the OAS.

Cooperation in the Development, Dissemination, and Teaching of International Law in the Hemisphere

- o. To promote agreements with various entities for the teaching and dissemination of inter-American law, including universities, institutes of international studies, and diplomatic academies, to encourage greater awareness of the legal heritage of the inter-American system and of the latest political developments within the framework of the Organization.
 - p. To promote cooperation with international organizations such as the United Nations, in particular the Sixth Committee of its General Assembly and the International Law Commission, as well as The Hague Academy of International Law, and The Hague Conference on Private International Law, as a means of further publicizing inter-American international law.
 - q. To promote the conclusion of cooperation agreements with various international financial agencies such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, and with foundations and other public and private entities that are in a position to provide financial assistance for the dissemination, development, and teaching of international law.
2. To instruct the Permanent Council to monitor this Program of Action, which will be carried out within allocated resources approved in the program-budget and other resources, and to request it to submit a report on the implementation of this resolution to the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth regular session.

APPENDIX

INTER-AMERICAN PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL LAW: PLAN OF ACTIVITIES FOR LEGAL COOPERATION AND INFORMATION IN 1997-98

Since the Inter-American Program for the Development of International Law has been adopted, it is advisable to define and establish priorities for the projects and specific activities to be implemented by the General Secretariat, through the Secretariat for Legal Affairs, in the area of legal cooperation and information in the 1997-98 period. Accordingly, the following activities, regarding which follow-up action will be taken by the Permanent Council, through its Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs, will be implemented during that time frame, within allocated resources approved in the program-budget and other resources.

- i. Develop the Inter-American Legal Information System so as to incorporate, via the Internet, the texts of inter-American treaties and conventions, national laws related to issues on the inter-American legal agenda, and resolutions, declarations, and plans of action adopted by the Organization with regard to that agenda.
- ii. Prepare for and organize the Meeting of Ministers of Justice of the Americas in accordance with the agreements and guidelines adopted by the Permanent Council once a decision has been made to hold it.
- iii. Develop, as stipulated in the Plan of Action of the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development, a hemisphere-wide network of officials and experts in environmental law, so as to facilitate the exchange of information and experience and to establish a focal point for cooperative efforts to strengthen laws and standards in this area.
- iv. Establish a data bank on current environmental law in the member states as part of the Inter-American Legal Information System.
- v. Organize a seminar with Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., on the inter-American legal system and its evaluation and prospects.
- vi. Hold Workshops on International Law to further the study and development of legal issues in the inter-American system, with the participation of high-level jurists and specialists in international law.
- vii. Publish periodically the Inter-American Juridical Bulletin.
- viii. Resume the publication of the Inter-American Juridical Yearbook in order to reintroduce a forum for the dissemination of expert doctrine on various aspects and topics relating to current inter-American law and its development.
- ix. Prepare an updated edition of the book *The Inter-American System: Juridical and Political Matters*, published by the General Secretariat in 1981.