

OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Office of Science and Technology (OST) was created by Executive Order No. 97-1, of January 29, 1997. This is the advisory office on all matters pertaining to science and technology. Its duties and functions are: to strengthen the technical capability and programs that have some scientific and/or technological component; to assist the member states in matters within its competence; to cooperate with and support the activities of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development; to foster the exchange and circulation of specialized information, and to coordinate the Inter-American Prizes awarded within its area of specialization.

Policy and dissemination

As Technical Secretariat of a number of policy-making and technical bodies of the region, the Office of Science and Technology has continued to provide ongoing technical advisory services in science and technology to national institutions, regional bodies and OAS organs, among them the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD), the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), the Inter-American Committee on Science and Technology (COMCYT) and others. These advisory services include the following matters, related to the formulation and implementation of scientific and technological policies: design, review and evaluation of proposed projects and activities that further the development, dissemination and popularization of science, technology and innovation in the Americas, such as seminars, workshops, and lectures by experts on the subject.

In April, the OST was instrumental in organizing the technical program for the regional workshop on “Indicators in Biotechnology,” held at the Universidad Técnica de Ambato, Ecuador in October. The resulting methodological study, the first of its kind in the Western Hemisphere, was requested by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and other organizations engaged in technological, economic and social development. In June, the OST participated in the Tenth Scientific Conference of the Ibero-American Program of Science and Technology for Development (CYTED), in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, in coordination with that country’s Secretariat of State for Higher Education, Science and Technology. This meeting was held within the framework of the XI Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, and the OST prepared and presented a document on “Increasing the Competitiveness and Productivity of Small- and Medium-sized Enterprise through the Use of Clean Technologies.”

At the invitation of Brazil’s Minister of Science and Technology, the OST attended the ALCUE-Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology as an observer. At that conference, held in Brazil in March, ministers and high-ranking authorities in science and technology from Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union discussed various opportunities for mutual cooperation in science and technology. The official in charge of the OST had a private meeting with Brazil’s Minister of Science and Technology and the Vice Chairman of the CNPq, to coordinate joint cooperative activities.

As Technical Secretariat of the forthcoming Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities of Science and Technology of the Hemisphere, the OST continues its coordination activities, especially those involving the preparation of reference documents in priority areas for the hemisphere. These reference documents will then be used as input in putting together the Plan of Action in Science and Technology for the years ahead. In the preparations for this meeting, the Office of Science and Technology and George Washington University have teamed up to organize a conference. Once that conference is finished, its documents will be examined, elaborated upon, and circulated among the national science and technology councils in the region.

The OST also took part in the “Workshop for Reflection: Indicators and New Policies in Science, Technology and Innovation in Latin America,” held in Sao Paulo in July. There, it gave a presentation on the “OAS’ Contribution to the Ibero-American/Inter-American Network of Science and Technology Indicators.” The presentation underscored the Organization’s role in developing the network, which was specifically mentioned by the Quebec Summit.

The OST participated as an observer at the General Assembly of the *International Congress of Scientific Unions (ICSU)*, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in October.

The OST also financed publication and circulation of the printed and on-line versions of various publications, among them the Bulletin of the Common Market of Scientific and Technological Knowledge (MERCOCYT) and the periodical of the Inter-American Metrology System (SIM), called INFOSIM Magazine. It also financed publication of the following books: “Metrology for non-Metrologists” and “*Programa Interamericano de Cooperación en Tecnologías Ambientales en Sectores Clave de la Industria*”. The names of other publications and papers, prepared in previous years, can be found at the OST’s website. Pursuing the Organization’s policy of dissemination, specialists from the OST gave interviews to a journalist from “Nature Magazine,” a U.S. periodical, to promote the science and technology activities that the OAS is conducting in the region.

Alliances with other institutions and international organizations

The OST has had talks with potential donors from observer countries. In April, specialists from the OST met with representatives from Germany’s *Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB)* to lay the groundwork for cooperation in the areas of metrology and accreditation and to establish the framework for a three-year financial assistance agreement. Also in April, OST experts met with representatives of Chile’s Technological Research Corporation (*Corporación de Investigación Tecnológica - INTEC*), to look at the possibilities for future cooperation in a number of areas of interest.

The OST is working closely with the Ibero-American Program of Science and Technology for Development [*Programa Iberoamericano de Ciencia y Tecnología (CYTED)*] and with the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation [*Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECI)*] to coordinate a fellowships program jointly with the IACD, used for regional workshops. These cooperative undertakings succeeded in funding 30 fellowship recipients from Colombia, Bolivia and Guatemala, enabling them to participate in workshops examining topics related to the problem of water, the use of wind energy, and biomaterials for human health. At the present time, efforts are underway to do the same in the year 2003, for other priority issues. Also, the OST and the IACD’s Fellowship Division continue to work together on evaluating applications for fellowships to participate in the Regular Training Program (PRA) and the Special Caribbean Fellowships Program (SPECAF).

The OST participated in the preparation of an agreement involving cooperation among the OAS, the CYTED, the Ibero-American Network of Science and Technology Indicators (RICyT), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Andrés Bello Agreement (CAB), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI). That agreement is currently in the process of being approved by the various international organizations involved. Its purpose is to form a Regional Science and Technology Observatory, an issue explicitly mentioned in the Plan of Action of the Quebec Summit of the Americas.

Technological services

In addition to the efforts for cooperation in metrology with the German government, the OST is assisting in the development of national metrology institutes (NMIs) in the 34 member states, principally in the four subregions (Andean - ANDIMET, Central America - CAMET, the Caribbean – CARIMET, and MERCOSUR - SURAMET). To that end, it is collaborating with the region's most advanced NMIs, especially for courses and special training for the staff of the institutes in the various subregions of the Inter-American Metrology System (SIM). Support continued to be provided for conducting exercises to compare patterns in physical metrology, chemical metrology and legal metrology, and the region's NMIs have been given support in the form of needed advisory and technical assistance and presentations on various related issues of interest.

Two seminars were held in May and July, both on the subject of “The Economic Impact of Metrology.” The first was in El Salvador and was targeted at the Central American countries, while the second was held in Trinidad and Tobago and was for the Caribbean group. Both seminars were intended to further the development of the NMIs in those subregions. A training program has been maintained for the various subregions of the SIM. In October, the SIM held its Eighth General Assembly, with 26 NMIs in attendance, representing the five subregions of the 34 member States of the OAS. Another event held in October was the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC), where that organization's new institutional structure was approved and where the OAS-supported project was presented, a project that the OST is following.

Also in October, the OST played an active role in organizing a touring workshop in Chile, Peru and Colombia, about the Biosecurity Protocol approved in Canada in 2000. The idea was to work with the countries in putting that Protocol into practice for moving living plants and organisms across borders.

Connectivity and information and communication technologies

The OST, through the Hemisphere Wide Inter-University Scientific and Technological Information System (RedHUCyT), provides permanent technical assistance to the member States that request it, in order to promote specialized information systems, such as the Ibero-American/Inter-American Network of Science and Technology Indicators (RICYT), the Latin American Chemistry Net (RELAQ), and the Latin American and Caribbean Scientific and Technological Information Network (INFOCYT). Internet statistics in the region are periodically updated and can be found at the Web page. This effort is being made to further the dissemination of scientific and technological information. Likewise, the OST continues to develop its Internet portal and to update the mirror pages for these networks and the mirror pages for the Inter-American Metrology System (SIM), the Specialized Biotechnology and Food Technology Network (SIMBIOSIS), the Inter-American Committee on Science and Technology (COMCYT) and Quality Management and PYMEs (OAS/GTZ), among others. The OST portal features a series of publications on a number of its priority areas and can be viewed at <http://www.science.oas.org/english/default.htm>.

In June, the OST participated in the Annual Meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee for Intercontinental Research Networking (CCIRN), organized by the National Science Foundation of the United States. There, the OST introduced the many attendees, who came from Asia, Europe and North America, to the most recent advances in connectivity in Latin America and the Caribbean.

TRADE UNIT

The Trade Unit was created by Executive Order No. 95-4, of April 3, 1995. Its basic purpose is to assist the member states in trade-related matters, which includes the functions assigned to the OAS at the Summit of the Americas in connection with the establishment of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Its functions are: to provide technical support to the Special Committee on Trade (CEC); to study the various aspects of trade relations in the Hemisphere; to ensure effective coordination with regional and subregional integration organizations, and to strengthen the trade information systems.

At its thirty-second regular session, held in Bridgetown, Barbados, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on “Trade and Integration in the Americas” (AG/RES. 1861/XXXII-O/02), wherein it affirmed the OAS’ commitment to supporting the process of free trade and economic integration in the hemisphere.

Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)

During the period covered by this report, the Trade Unit assisted the member States during the three levels of the FTAA process: the meetings of the FTAA negotiating groups; the Seventh Meeting of Ministers of Trade, on November 1 in Quito, Ecuador; and the three vice ministerials held in May on Isla de Margarita, Venezuela, in August in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, and in October in Quito, Ecuador, respectively.

These activities were coordinated with the other two institutions serving with the OAS on the Tripartite Committee (TC), namely the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). During the period leading up to the Quito Ministerial, the OAS was coordinating the TC. Its term began in July 2002, based on the six-month rotation system established.

The work the Trade Unit performed to assist the negotiating groups was a function of those groups’ mandate and included compilations, studies, analyses and technical assistance services requested by the groups.

In the Quito Declaration, the Ministers made a number of specific requests of the Tripartite Committee, namely: 1) That the Tripartite Committee and the Consultative Group on Smaller Economies (CGSE) continue to support the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) to prepare a report on the progress achieved in relation to the treatment of differences in the levels of development and size of economies in each of the Negotiating Groups; 2) That the TNC, with the support of the Tripartite Committee, facilitate meetings of the Consultative Group on Smaller Economies (CGSE), inviting appropriate development and financial officials, international financial institutions, international agencies, and interested private entities to discuss financing and implementation of the HCP.

During this period, the Trade Unit continued to provide support to seven of the ten negotiating groups: Investment; Services; Intellectual Property Rights; Subsidies, Antidumping and Countervailing Duties; Competition Policy; and Dispute Settlement. The Trade Unit also provided assistance on Standards and Technical Barriers to Trade, being examined by the Market Access Negotiating Group. Various types of advisory assistance were provided on the following subjects to the bodies indicated: Smaller Economies, to the Technical Committee on Institutional Matters and to the Consultative Group; the Participation of Civil Society, to the Committee of Government Representatives, to the Joint Committee of Experts from the Public and Private Sectors on E-commerce; and Management and Budget, to the TNC’s Subcommittee.

The Tripartite Committee also continued to carry out the specific requests that the Ministers made in the Ministerial Declarations of Toronto and Buenos Aires.

Foreign Trade Information System

The purpose of the Foreign Trade Information System (SICE) is to provide up-to-date and complete information on trade in the hemisphere, in the OAS' four official languages. Ever since SICE's data was made available at the Web page (www.sice.oas.org), the number of users has increased steadily and numbered around 1,053,174 in 2002.

SICE has documents on the following topics: the FTAA process; trade agreements and bilateral investment agreements between the OAS member countries; intellectual property; commercial arbitration; trade-related institutions; general information about the countries; businesses and chambers of commerce; quantitative data, including trade flows, tariffs and prices. The full content of the site is now available for sale in CD-ROM format.

Thanks to SICE support and in conjunction with the FTAA Administrative Secretariat, the FTAA's Documents Distribution Service was launched on May 1, 1999. That service allows restricted access to documents prepared in the process of the negotiation of the FTAA. The number of documents available at the site increased dramatically between 1999 and 2002. Initially the service had 598 documents, but by the end of 2002, the number of documents available at the site exceeded 23,000.

As part of the mandates received at the ministerial meeting held in Toronto in November 1999, the Trade Unit-SICE, as a member of the Tripartite Committee, is responsible for keeping an updated timetable with the deadlines set by the negotiating groups for receiving the delegations' contributions.

Interinstitutional cooperation

Within the framework of the Tripartite Committee, the Trade Unit is working closely with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to lend support to various bodies within the FTAA process. It has also worked on specific projects with other international institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and subregional organizations like the Latin American Integration Organization (ALADI), the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA), the Andean Community, the Caribbean Regional Negotiations Mechanism (CRNM) and MERCOSUR.

Technical cooperation

In response to the mandates received, the emphasis during this period has been on technical assistance functions. For many countries of the region, especially the smaller economies, activities of this type are vital as they make it possible for the smaller economies to actively participate in the trade negotiations underway and strengthen their capacity to implement the results of those negotiations.

Officials from the Trade Unit have worked with the member States, acting upon requests for assistance with specific projects in the area of trade and integration, while also participating in seminars, workshops conferences and lectures to which they were invited as experts.

Starting in the final quarter of 2002, the Trade Unit provided technical assistance to the Government of El Salvador to help it put together its National Plan of Action for Trade-related Capacity Building. That Plan

is being prepared in order to define, prioritize and coordinate what that country will need to build capacities in the process of negotiating the NAFTA-USA-CA Negotiation Process. Also, as part of that negotiation process, the Trade Unit played an active role in the cooperation component, as a member of the coordinating group –along with the IDB and ECLAC- and of the Donors Committee for Central America.

The key factor in the area of technical assistance was the program titled “Trade and Integration in the Americas: Advanced Training Program for Government Officials,” financed by the IACD and sponsored by a member State. Under this program, the following multilateral and subregional seminars and workshops were conducted:

- Sponsored by Trinidad and Tobago, the “Workshop on Services for Government Officials” was held in Guatemala City, Guatemala, in February 2002. At that workshop, information was circulated and shared with government officials from Central America, Mexico and the Dominican Republic, about the FTAA process and particularly trade in services in the context of the WTO and FTAA negotiations.
- In May, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago was the venue of the Conference on “Trade-related Capacity Building: Focus on the Americas Conference and Donors’ Workshop,” organized by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in conjunction with the OAS, the IDB and ECLAC. The donors discussed their strategies and objectives for trade-related capacity building in the Americas.
- In June 2002, the “Advanced training course for government officials on multilateral and regional trade approaches for the Americas” was held for the fifth consecutive year. In the last five years, this course has been the centerpiece of the OAS’ trade-related capacity building activities, with particular emphasis on the smaller economies. The course was coordinated in partnership with the WTO and Georgetown University and this year was given in English. It received funding from the United States Government and the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD).
- With the sponsorship of Trinidad and Tobago, three meetings of the Research Network on Trade in the Americas (NetAmericas) were held in Washington, D.C. in June and November. The purpose of the first, titled “Challenges on Key Issues for Modern Trade Agreements,” was to provide an opportunity to exchange views on the multilateral and regional trade negotiations. The second, titled “Third Meeting of the NetAmericas Coordinating Committee,” helped examined the membership of the network and approved panels and the distribution of the budget for the annual conference, titled “Integrating the Americas.” In November, the conference on “Integrating the Americas” was held. The papers and other materials of interest are available at <http://www.netamericas.net>.

Seminars, workshops and publications

The seminar on “The Doha Development Agenda and the FTAA Process: the Challenge of Capacity Building” took place in Washington, D.C. in February 2002. Organized by the Trade Unit, its purpose was to inform the OAS missions and trade specialists about the progress in the FTAA process and its linkages, particularly with respect to the Doha Development Agenda and the FTAA process. Participating in this seminar were Mr. Mike Moore, Director General de la WTO, and Mr. Miguel Rodríguez Mendoza, Deputy Director General, as well as Peter Allgeier, the United States Deputy Trade Representative.

In February 2002, Panajachel, Guatemala, was the site of a “Seminar on the FTAA and the WTO: Implications and challenges for the smaller economies of the hemisphere,” co-sponsored by the OAS, the

International Development Research Center (IDRC), the Latin American Trade Network (LATN) and the World Bank.

In February 2002, a Workshop on Investment was held in Jamaica, organized by the Trade Unit and the Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO) and financed by the Caribbean Region Investment Initiative (CRII). The objective of that seminar was to circulate and exchange information among Jamaican government officials about the FTAA process, particularly where investments are concerned.

In February, August, September and October 2002, four workshops were held on services and investments. The first two workshops were in the Dominican Republic; both were government organized. The first was titled “Services Workshop on Modalities and Procedures for the Services Negotiations” and afforded an opportunity to discuss key issues related to trade in services and the liberalization of services in the context of the WTO and FTAA negotiations. The workshop was for more than 20 officials involved in the services area. The second was an intensive workshop on the topic of services and investments. The third, held in September in El Salvador, was titled “Financial Services and the International Trade Negotiations on Services.” It was sponsored jointly by the OAS and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The fourth workshop, held in Lima, was an investment training event sponsored jointly by the OAS, the WTO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Institute for Latin American and Caribbean Integration (INTAL).

In April 2002, a National Seminar on the FTAA was held in Belmopán, Belize, co-sponsored by the Centre for Trade Policy and Law (Canada) and the Caribbean Regional Negotiation Machinery (CRNM).

In May 2002, the Trade Unit and ECLAC organized the Conference on Hemispheric Cooperation on Competition Policies, where high-level government representatives and academics were able to exchange views on issues of fundamental importance to the countries of the Western Hemisphere, specifically to establish mechanisms of transboundary cooperation in the area of competition policies.

In July 2002, the Trade Unit partnered with the CRNM and the Ambassadors in the Washington, D.C. area to hold a seminar about the Caribbean’s business future in the FTAA.

In October 2002, the following studies were published as part of the Trade Unit’s Studies series: *Can Regional Liberalization of Services go further than Multilateral Liberalization under the GATT?*, by Sherry Stephenson, and *Proliferation of Sub-Regional Trade Agreements in the Americas: An Assessment of Key Analytical and Policy Issues*, by José M. Salazar-Xirinachs.

The Special Committee on Trade and its Advisory Group

The Special Committee on Trade (SCT) and its Advisory Group did not meet in 2002. Consequently, the Trade Unit did not have occasion to provide these bodies with support. At its thirtieth regular session, in Windsor, Ontario, the General Assembly resolved “To accept the recommendation of the Chairman of the SCT, based on his consultations with the member states of the SCT, to maintain the *status quo*, that is, to maintain the existence of the SCT without convening the Committee.”

UNIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

The Unit for Social Development and Education was created by Executive Order No. 96-5, of June 1996. It is responsible for providing technical and operational support to the member states and to the OAS' deliberative bodies in the following areas: strengthening educational systems; promoting job opportunities and job training, and formulating public policies and strategies aimed at combating poverty and discrimination. To achieve this objective, the Unit conducts and coordinates studies, research, and exchanges of information and experiences. It also promotes training, supports initiatives to build partnership among countries, among international cooperation and development agencies, and among governmental and nongovernmental institutions on formulation of policies in social development, education, culture, employment.

In the course of 2002, the Unit continued to follow an intense program of technical and operational support to the political bodies of the OAS, advisory services, and activities to strengthen inter-American cooperation in the areas of education, employment, social development and culture. The Unit's priorities have centered on follow-up of the mandates from the Summits of the Americas, the General Assembly and the CIDI. To comply with those mandates, the Unit worked closely with other agencies of the inter-American system, other international cooperation and development agencies, and civil society organizations.

Social development and overcoming poverty

The Unit continued its support as Technical Secretariat of the Social Network of Latin America and the Caribbean. Its job is to administer the Network's voluntary fund and to facilitate the holding of the annual conference, seminars and fellowships contemplated in the Network's 2002 work program. The Ninth Annual Conference of the Social Network was held in Asuncion, Paraguay, December 4 through 6. The event was organized by the Social Network, Paraguay's Secretariat for Social Action and the OAS. At this meeting, the Network's 2003 Work Program was approved, as was the Declaration of Asuncion. During this period, the following three seminars were also organized: the Special Meeting of the Social Network of Latin America and the Caribbean, January 30 to February 1, in Cartagena de Indias; a seminar on social policies and decentralization, March 18 through 21, in La Paz, Bolivia; and a seminar on "Social Policy Today: New Prospects from Latin America and the Caribbean," in Mexico City, October 16 through 18.

Under an agreement signed with the IDB, the UDSE is serving as executing agency of the Intra-Regional Fellowships Program among the member institutions of the Social Network. Under this program, the UDSE organized, in partnership with the IDB's Inter-American Institute for Social Development (INDES), a "Seminar on Social Management for Directors of the Social Investment Funds that are members of the Social Network," held at INDES headquarters in Washington, D.C., August 19 through 23.

Pursuant to resolution AG/RES. 1854 (XXXII-O/02) "Poverty, Equity and Social Inclusion," the UDSE provided support to the CEPCIDI Subcommittee on Partnership for Development Policies during the preparations for the Inter-American Forum on Poverty, Equity and Social Inclusion, which was scheduled to be held in Caracas, Venezuela, November 20 through 22.

Following the directives of the Third Summit of the Americas, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Declaration against Violence that the Ministers of Education signed at the Second Meeting of Ministers in the CIDI framework, and the specific mandate contained in resolution AG/RES. 1869

(XXXII-O02) “Promotion of Democratic Culture” –where the UDSE is asked to do a study on how member states include instruction on the values and principles of democracy in the member States’ educational curricula, the Unit launched research on this subject whose results are listed below:

- Preparation of a research proposal titled “*Strengthening Democracy in the Americas: Values, Citizenship and Education*”, which received a grant from the Permanent Mission of the United States to the OAS so that the research can be conducted in 2002-2003.
- Formalization of a cooperation agreement to conduct the above research, concluded with the Director of the International Project on Civic Education of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), who will provide technical support to the OAS project, as will other professionals.
- Holding of the First Meeting of the Project Advisory Committee at OAS headquarters on May 7. Based on an analysis of the OAS project, the Committee presented a number of guidelines for conducting the project.
- Preparation of the first version of the study, which will be submitted to the Advisory Committee to consider at its Second Meeting, slated for the first quarter of 2003.

The UDSE is also conducting a hemispheric inquiry to identify the consolidated programs on education for democracy and civic values existing in the various member States, through the strategy of horizontal cooperation developed through the Permanent Portfolio of Consolidated Programs.

The Unit prepared the document titled “Best Practices in Social Development: Experiences of the Social Investment Funds.” That document compiles and organizes information on programs conducted by the hemisphere’s social investment funds in the following areas: 1) Execution of social policies; 2) Community participation; 3) Programs targeted at vulnerable groups; and 4) Employment- and income-generating programs. The horizontal cooperation programs planned in the area of social development for 2003 are based on the experiences compiled in that document.

In conjunction with the IACD, the UDSE prepared a proposal to respond to the mandate contained in resolution AG/RES 1865 (XXXII-O/02) “Follow-up on the International Conference on Financing for Development,” which calls upon the member States to look for mechanisms to transform the commitments of the international donor community into concrete actions that have an impact on national development efforts. This proposal has been presented to and discussed by CEPCIDI and the OAS Permanent Council. It has also been submitted to and discussed with the IDB, ECLAC and PAHO, among other agencies of the inter-American system.

Education

In response to the mandate from the Third Summit of the Americas and as Technical Secretariat of the Second Meeting of Ministers of Education in the CIDI framework, the UDSE organized a series of meetings and participated actively in others, all to make headway in identifying educational challenges and prepare the content of the best practices for horizontal cooperation.

In compliance with the decision of the Ministers of Education and under the coordination of Mexico as the country organizing the educational theme in the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), the UDSE worked on preparation of a set of proposed regulations and an agreement for the creation of the Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE). Those documents were studied and discussed by all the member countries in various forums. In Resolution AG/RES. 1859, the General Assembly resolved to create the CIE and instructed CEPCIDI to approve its regulations *ad referendum* of the next regular or special meeting of the CIDI. At a regular meeting held on November 14, the CEPCIDI approved the

regulations, whereupon the CIE was installed. With this phase completed, the system now has a body for critical reflection and consensus-building on the educational challenges of the hemisphere, which will make it possible to prepare and follow up on the ministerial commitments undertaken within the framework of the Summits of the Americas.

- *Meeting of the Expanded G-11.* As coordinator of the G-11, Mexico invited the representatives of the ministries of education to meet on December 9 and 10 at OAS headquarters in Washington, and asked the UDSE to act as technical secretariat of the meeting. This meeting examined the question of what would become of the G-11 now that the CIE had been created. Work also got underway on the priority hemispheric issues with a view to the Third Meeting of Ministers of Education, to be held in August 2003. The following delegations attended: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador (also representing Guatemala), Mexico, Peru, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and the United States. It was agreed that the CIE would be inaugurated at the Third Meeting of the Ministers of Education, where the fate of the G-11 would also be decided. Argentina offered to host the preparatory meeting for the education ministerial. Topics were proposed for inclusion on its agenda.

- *Horizontal cooperation strategy / Permanent Portfolio of Consolidated Programs.* In response to the Education Ministers' stated commitment to strengthen horizontal cooperation among countries, the UDSE put together a permanent portfolio of consolidated programs which now has 17 programs in 17 countries of the hemisphere, and can be found at Web page www.oas.org/udse. Based on this report, a hemispheric inquiry was conducted to establish a grid of supply and demand for educational programs, to identify those most needed. Once the inquiry had been conducted, the second phase of the cooperation strategy got underway with the education programs in greatest demand. This second phase involves internships for up to 15 days, where officials from the countries interested in each of the experiences will have an opportunity to get to know the education programs firsthand, to meet with the educators directly involved and to examine how the programs might be carried over and applied in their own specific contexts. The officials pledge that upon returning to their countries, they will follow up on the lessons learned and develop a pilot project based on those lessons. Once the internship has been completed, the UDSE remains in contact with the participants and keeps informed by means of a Web page designed exclusively for that purpose. Each of the internships has a Web page.

In a joint undertaking wherein the countries offering courses were partnered with those interested in them, the UDSE and the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation (IACD) conducted the following internships:

- *Educational Informatics in Costa Rica.* Held in coordination with the Fundación Omar Dengo, from September 30 to October 11. Participating were officials from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, and Venezuela. For more information, go to the following Web address: <http://www.oas.org/udse/pasantia-costarica/index.html>

- *EDUCO of El Salvador.* From November 4 through 15, with officials from Argentina, Colombia, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay participating. For more information, visit the following Web address: <http://www.oas.org/udse/pasantia-elsalvador/index.html>

- *Enlaces de Chile.* Held December 5 through 13, with officials from Argentina, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Uruguay participating.

Other internships have been planned for the coming year and will focus on experiences with *Institutional Management* in Mexico and Argentina, *Rural Post-primary Education* in Colombia, and *Secondary Distance Education for Adults* in Mexico.

- *Cooperation strategies.* Responding to the mandates to devise horizontal cooperation strategies on the priority issues in the 5 thematic areas, three projects were submitted to various agencies in an effort to find funding for them. One such project proposal was submitted to the World Bank under the title “*The OAS Country-Based Education Advisory Service and Network for increasing Equity with Quality in Lower Secondary Education*”, and received funding from the Bank to develop the program on a Knowledge and Advisory Service Network (CONARED).
- *OAS-SEP Cooperation Agreement* among the UDSE, the IACD and the Latin American Institute for Educational Communication (ILCE). In the spirit of cooperation, through its Secretariat for Public Education (SEP) and ILCE, Mexico has offered all the member States free access to Mexico’s educational satellite system, the “EDUSAT Educational Television Satellite Network.” Use of this signal and of the educational programming content developed by the SEP will make it possible to conduct joint programs aimed at raising the quality of basic education in the hemisphere. Officials from the SEP and ILCE are working out the terms of a cooperation agreement. On their visit to Washington, ILCE’s representatives gave a presentation about EDUSAT’s technical features at the CEPAC meeting on November 14.
- *Bilingual education in multicultural settings.* The UDSE and the IACD teamed up with Mexico’s Secretariat of Public Education to conduct a seminar on The Quality of Education in Multicultural Settings, December 4 through 13. The seminar discussed the challenges of educational quality in multicultural settings and the need to assist with the critical transfer of the lessons learned from each country’s intercultural programs. Participating in the seminar were government representatives, academics and indigenous leaders from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Peru.
- *Teacher training and refresher courses.* The UDSE is working on a proposal for an “*International Program for Teacher Refresher Courses.*” At the request of Mexico’s Secretariat for Public Education, a concrete proposal was put together involving cooperation with U.S. agencies to train teachers and principals from the Federal District. At the same time, the Unit is also working on a hemispheric proposal to devise strategies for cooperation on the subject of teacher training and refresher courses.
- *Hemispheric diagnostic study on education and social development.* In the area of education and in the Unit’s other areas, subregional diagnostic studies are being done to identify the most vulnerable populations and the subregion’s needs. The Unit is working on proposals that are responsive to those needs, the priority being to combat poverty. This undertaking will serve as input for the *Hemispheric Diagnostic Study on Education and Social Development* that the Unit has been performing. This ongoing diagnostic study makes it possible to identify the key problems and underscores the importance in the hemisphere of sustained social policy coupled with ever-increasing investment.
- *OAS/Harvard University-Rockefeller Center Cooperation Program.* As a result of the agreement concluded with Harvard University’s Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, six graduate students from the schools of Education and Government worked on the Unit’s activities during the summer months. The main activities included preparation of subregional diagnostic studies and funding proposals, and collaboration in identifying and institutionalizing best practices in the UDSE’s thematic areas.
- *Advances in subregional cooperation.* On November 12, the UDSE and the IACD welcomed the Ministers of Education of Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama. The meeting was about focusing cooperation strategies in the region around their specific challenges and priorities. A decision was made to focus efforts on initial education, secondary education and certification of job skills.

- *Advisory services for the IACD's financing strategy.* The UDSE has been providing the IACD with technical advice about the programs presented in the education area for funding under the 2003 FEMCIDI account, to ensure that those programs fit the educational priorities delineated at the Third Summit of the Americas. The UDSE also provides technical advisory services on programming FEMCIDI funds for 2003, by participating in and providing technical support at the subregional meetings where countries map out their development priorities and later when the features of subregional projects in education, social development, labor and culture are determined.

Cooperation with other agencies and international organizations

- The Unit participated in the Twelfth Ibero-American Conference on Education, convened by the Organization of Ibero-American States and held in the Dominican Republic on July 1 and 2. The meeting highlighted opportunities for joint endeavors in the areas of initial education, the use of technologies in education, and higher education.
- Through the Unit, the OAS continued to work with UNESCO to provide support to countries on issues related to the Dakar agreements on Education for All and the Third Summit of the Americas.
- The OAS and PAHO teamed up to offer quality education and related assistance to vulnerable groups in the countries.

Culture

First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities of Culture and preparatory activities

In compliance with the mandates from the Third Summit of the Americas and resolutions CIDI/RES. 127 (VII-O/02) and AG/RES. 1868 (XXXII-O/02), support was provided to prepare, organize and stage the First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities of Culture within the framework of CIDI, held in Cartagena de Indias July 12 and 13. In preparation for the meeting, assistance was provided with the following:

- The holding of the First Seminar of Experts on Cultural Diversity, held in Vancouver on March 18 and 19. Logistical support was provided for the staging of this event, as was coordination of the various delegations' participation.
- Preparatory Meeting for the First Meeting of Ministers of Culture, held at OAS headquarters on June 13 and 14. The Preparatory Meeting discussed and approved the final versions of the agenda, draft Declaration and draft Plan of Action, which were then considered at the Ministerial itself.
- The UDSE served as Technical Secretariat of the 10 meetings held by the CEPCIDI Working Group on the First Meeting of Ministers of Culture, the Preparatory Meeting and finally the Ministerial itself.

Inter-agency coordination

Inter-agency meetings on cultural diversity were convoked and coordinated in furtherance of the Cartagena de Indias Action Plan. These took place at OAS headquarters, April 29 and 30, and in Cartagena de Indias, July 11. Participating in these meetings were the following organizations: the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI), the IDB, the World Bank, the Regional Centre for the Promotion of Books in Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLALC), the International Council on Monuments and Sites, United States chapter (ICOMOS), the National Endowment for the Arts, the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI), the Andrés Bello Agreement (CAB), UNESCO, the International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP) and the International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies (IFACCA).

As a result of the meetings and to bolster the Plan of Action, two inter-agency cooperation grids were created that summarize each organization's programs in each of the five areas on cultural diversity. Also, a "Strategy for Inter-agency Cultural Cooperation" was adopted in support of the commitments undertaken vis-à-vis cultural diversity.

- *Promotion of civil society's participation.* Civil society's participation in the First Cultural Ministerial was furthered through the "Virtual Forum on Cultural Diversity in the Hemisphere." Support was provided to meetings that civil society organizations held during the First Meeting of Ministers of Culture, to help them prepare a document with their recommendations, contributions and comments on the Declaration and Plan of Action of Cartagena de Indias.
- *Cooperation agreements with Hispanic organizations in the United States.* The UDSE participated in the Fourth Conference of the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture, held in Austin, Texas in September. It presented a report titled "Cultural diversity and negotiating unity," which emphasized the challenge of building a multicultural citizenry where Latino culture is recognized. It also emphasized how important it was that the Latino community organize in order to be recognized as a force within the broader community.
- *Horizontal cooperation strategy.* Following the strategy of horizontal cooperation proposed by its Director and approved in Cartagena, the UDSE prepared a Permanent Portfolio of 29 consolidated programs presented by the member States. It was then circulated in order to establish which programs elicited the greatest interest from all the countries. Based on the responses received from the countries, 6 programs were selected; internships or exchange activities will be conducted in connection with those 6 programs in 2003. Participants will be introduced to the programs, thus achieving the critical carry-over effect so that those programs may be applied in other contexts.
- *Support for the formation of the Inter-American Committee on Culture and the Inter-American Cultural Policy Observatory.* The UDSE is assisting CEPAC's Subcommittee on Policies with preparation of a feasibility study on the creation of an Inter-American Cultural Policy Observatory, with funds from the Government of Canada and the Andres Bello Agreement. It is also providing that Subcommittee with technical support in compiling the member States' observations on the draft Regulations for establishment of the Inter-American Committee on Culture, created at the First Meeting of Ministers of Culture, and for establishment of a timetable for starting up that Committee.
- *Participation in meetings and conferences.* Through the UDSE, the OAS was a speaker at the First Inter-American Languages Management Seminar, organized by the *Conseil de la langue française*, the Government of Quebec and other organizations. It also participated in the Seminar on Cultural Statistics, organized by the Government of Canada, the Government of Quebec, Canada Statistics, the UNESCO Statistics Institute and the Rockefeller Foundation.
- *Agreements with international organizations and nongovernmental organizations.* Talks got underway with Art Without Borders, a nongovernmental organization, to study the possibility of a cooperation agreement between the UDSE and that organization. Contacts were also established with representatives of the Pan American Round Tables, a nongovernmental organization officially accredited by the Permanent Council. The idea is to examine jointly the development of projects and activities. At the UDSE's initiative, the General Secretariat signed cooperation agreements with the following nongovernmental organizations: the Youth Orchestra of the Americas, the UNESCO Centre for the Promotion of Books in Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLALC), and the Andres Bello Agreement. Execution of an agreement with the IDB's Cultural Center continued, to co-sponsor a lecture series on Culture and Development. At the UDSE's initiative, the General Secretariat signed a cooperation

agreement with the Latin Union. Also, the cooperation agreement between the General Secretariat and the Andres Bello Agreement was updated to renew joint projects and activities.

- *Publications and studies.* Experts were contracted to prepare studies that would contribute to the thinking and discussion about the relationship between cultural diversity, globalization and development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The documents produced under these contracts and the names of their authors are as follows: Bernardo Subercaseaux. “*Globalización, nación y cultura en América Latina (Desafíos y estrategias para preservar la diversidad cultural)*”; Rodolfo Stavenhagen. “*La Diversidad Cultural en el Desarrollo de las Américas - Los pueblos indígenas y los estados nacionales en Hispanoamérica*”; José Alvaro Moisés. “*Diversidad Cultural y Desarrollo en las Américas*”; Ian Isidore Smart. “*El papel de la Diversidad Cultural en el Desarrollo de las Américas*”; Néstor García Canclini. “*Las Industrias Culturales y el Desarrollo de los Países Americanos*”.

Employment and labor development

- *Support to the working groups of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor.* Through the UDSE the OAS participated in and supported the meetings of the Working Groups established by the Twelfth Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor. Group I on the Labor Dimensions of the Summit of the Americas Process, and Group II on Capacity Building in the Ministries of Labor, held their meetings in the Dominican Republic in April. As a result of the agreements reached at those meetings, the UDSE prepared a subregional diagnostic report (MERCOSUR, Andean Community, Central America, the Caribbean and North America) on the status of unemployment, poverty, eradication of child labor and the number of children who do not attend school. This report will be instrumental in steering the Unit’s work by pointing up each region’s needs.
- *Participation in seminars.* As technical secretariat of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor, the UDSE sent representatives to two technical seminars in preparation for the Twelfth Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor. The first, New Labor Relations and the Digital Divide, and the second, Unemployment Insurance Systems in the Americas, were held in Montreal and Miami, respectively. As a result of its participation in these two seminars, the UDSE submitted two projects to the IACD for funding. These two projects draw on the experiences of the countries that attended. It also offered to organize another seminar on gender and work.
- *Horizontal cooperation strategy.* To promote horizontal cooperation among countries, the UDSE prepared a grid of the supply and demand for consolidated programs for training and certification of job skills, labor mediation, placement services, and the needs of the smaller economies in building up the labor systems’ capacities, particularly in Central America and CARICOM. As part of this horizontal cooperation strategy, in partnership with Mexico’s Secretariat of Labor and Social Security and with financial support from the IACD, the UDSE organized workshops in Mexico and Panama on the CONOCER program in Mexico. The UDSE plans to conduct an on-line course on certification of job skills for the Central American countries and a classroom course on the same topic for the Caribbean countries.
- *Inter-agency coordination.* The UDSE held coordination meetings with the IACD, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), to set up joint working channels and to coordinate its activities with them. A joint undertaking with these institutions got underway, focusing in particular on identification and sharing of best practices in the area of health and job safety, with a view to promoting the sharing of those programs among the countries of the Americas sometime in the future.

The UDSE is working closely with the ILO team in charge of the project to assist the XII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (CIMT) with the follow-up and support of the working groups and the definition of cooperation activities.

La UDSE participated in the Hispanic Forum on a Safe and Healthy Environment, where it described the OAS' vision of the labor and social challenges that the regional integration processes pose.

- *Support with project preparation.* At the request of certain Caribbean countries, the Unit provided advisory services in connection with preparation of the project on Enhancement of the Labor Inspection Function in Selected Caribbean Countries, which will receive FEMCIDI funding in 2003.

UNIT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

The Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment was created by Executive Order No. 96-6, of June 28, 1996. It is the General Secretariat's principal unit for matters directly related to sustainable development and environment. Its purpose is to support the activities of the Organization, its organs and entities with formulation of policies on sustainable development and environment in the region. It devises, evaluates, and executes the technical cooperation projects in its areas of competence and provides advisory services and technical support on matters related to sustainable development, including the programs designed to develop environmental legislation, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and environmental education. The Unit is also active in areas highlighted by the hemispheric summits and has a particularly vital role to play in monitoring the Santa Cruz Plan of Act, adopted by the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, December 1996).

The Unit's activities in 2002 were driven by the mandates from the Summits; the resolutions approved by the Organization's General Assembly; the mandates emanating from the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development, approved by the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh regular session, held in Lima, Peru, June 1997; the Strategic Plan for Partnership for Development 2002-2005, and the resolutions approved at the Third Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Sustainable Development, February 11 and 12, 2002.

At the present time, the portfolio of projects that the USDE currently has underway totals approximately US\$62 million. More than 95% of that amount is financed with funding from sources outside the OAS. The Unit's Web page features the principal activities currently in progress and their links, and can be visited at the following Web address (<http://www.oas.org/usde>.)

Activities associated with the Bolivia Summit

The activities to coordinate and follow up the Santa Cruz Plan of Action continued. The Unit assisted the Working Group of the Inter-American Committee on Sustainable Development (CIDS), created under the CEPACIDI umbrella, with preparations for the III CIDS meeting. A grid was circulated among the member States to evaluate the progress made in executing the Santa Cruz Plan of Action.

In furtherance of the mandates related to the Santa Cruz Plan of Action and contained in the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development, the USDE conducted the following activities:

The USDE carried on with the implementation phase of the Inter-American Strategy for the Promotion of Public Participation in Decision-Making on Sustainable Development (ISP), acting on resolution CIDI/CIDS/RES. 6 (III-O/02), approved by the Inter-American Committee on Sustainable Development (CIDS III) on February 12, 2002. It also continued to back efforts to put that strategy into practice, by developing mechanisms enabling close collaboration between the public and private sectors on issues of sustainable development and environment.

The Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) was created in 1996 as an initiative of the Summit of the Americas, a conclave of the chiefs of State of the member countries. This initiative continues to grow. By now, 29 countries have already been designated as focal points for IABIN. This initiative will provide the infrastructure for the information network (such as standards and protocols) as well as the scientific content that the countries of this hemisphere need to improve decision-making, especially where human development and preservation of the biodiversity are at odds. Early in 2002, the

Global Environment Facility (GEF), the financial arm of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), contributed US\$650,000 to consolidate the Network and to prepare a more sweeping project that will be presented to the GEF Council in 2003.

The Inter-American Forum on Environmental Law (FIDA) was the brainchild of the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development, held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in 1996. Its purpose was to serve as a "hemispheric network of officials and experts in environmental law, enforcement, and compliance," working in coordination with the OAS. In keeping with the purposes that its creation set out to achieve, an on-line dialogue was conducted about cleaner and more energy-efficient production policies in South America. It was done with the support of the Andean Development Corporation (CAF), UNIDO and other organizations. Also, working with the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), a workshop was organized in Managua, Nicaragua, on policies available for cleaner production in the Central American region. The Inter-American Forum on Environmental Law (FIDA) produced reports on the results of both activities.

FIDA is working with governmental and nongovernmental partners in the Americas to conduct national evaluations of the environmental impact of the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas Agreement (FTAA) and to discuss alternative policies with OAS member States. The project began in September 2001 with studies on Argentina and Brazil. These studies will be reviewed by groups of experts in March 2003. Early in 2003, work will begin on the reports on Paraguay, Uruguay and two or more Central American countries.

During this same period, the Final Report of the Fourth Inter-American Dialogue on Water Management was published and two special issues of the newsletter of the Inter-American Water Resources Network, *Dialogue Update*, were prepared in three languages.

Following up on point II.4 of the Santa Cruz Plan of Action, point 4.4 of the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development, and resolution CIDI/CIDS/RES. 3 (II-O/99), the USDE continued execution of special projects that help shape national and regional policies on integrated management of water resources and coastal areas in various countries of the Americas. Together, they represent a portfolio of around US\$30,000,000.

Inter-agency Task Force (IATF) on the Bolivia Summit Follow-up

As chair of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) Working Group on Mainstreaming Disaster Reduction in Development (MDRD), the Unit organized the Third Workshop on Vulnerability Assessment Techniques and Applications (VAT III) in collaboration with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) –which sponsored the event- and the U.S. National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Secretariat of the Summit Process currently has the IATF's role in the structure of the Summit Follow-up under review.

Activities related to the Summit of the Americas

As mandated by the Third Summit of the Americas, the Third Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Sustainable Development (CIDS) and Santa Cruz+ 5 was held at OAS headquarters, February 11 and 12. Its objectives included presentation of contributions for the Rio+10 Summit in 2002. For the occasion, the USDE prepared and circulated the General Secretariat's Second Report on the progress made toward sustainable development in the Americas, titled *Toward Sustainable Development in the Americas, Report on Summit Implementation*.

In compliance with mandates from the Second and Third Summits of the Americas, a cooperation agreement was concluded with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), for a USAID grant of US\$97,635 to further the advances made with implementation of the program to improve property records. That program is being carried out through the Virtual Office of the Inter-Summit Property Systems Initiative (IPSI), a mechanisms that USAID and the OAS created for that purpose.

The USDE is working with the General Secretariat, which chairs the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (IACNDR), on preparing the draft of the Inter-American Strategic Plan for Disaster Reduction, Risk Management and Emergency Preparedness, for the member States to consider implementing.

Activities associated with General Assembly mandates

In compliance with General Assembly resolution AG/RES. 1896 “Human Rights and Environment,” the Unit launched an initiative intended to help promote institutional collaboration within the Organization on the subject of human rights and the environment, particularly between the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the USDE.

Similarly, the Unit participated in a general hearing with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, requested by CEDHA. The hearing looked at the effects of environmental degradation on the exercise and enjoyment of human rights in the hemisphere.

Activities with international organizations.

Through the USDE, the General Secretariat’s role began in the official consultation launched by the Inter-American Development Bank to prepare the Bank’s Environmental Strategy in conjunction with other organizations.

Technical cooperation activities

Water resources and transboundary ecosystems

The Unit continued its efforts to strengthen technical cooperation among the member States for integrated and sustainable management of water resources in transboundary basins and coastal areas. The USDE is a member of the Executive Committee of the GEF/Block B project titled Integrated Freshwater Basin and Coastal Area Management in Small Developing Island States. Under the Strategic Plan of Action for the Bermejo River Binational Basin (PEA), the Unit continued to implement activities geared to reducing and controlling environmental degradation and promoting development of the binational basin, as programmed during the planning phase. The project is being executed in cooperation with the governments of Argentina and Bolivia, through the Binational Commission for Development of the Upper Bermejo and Grande de Tarija River Basin, with funding from the GEF in the amount of US\$11.4 million. According to plan, the project will be completed in October 2005.

During 2002, the USDE continued its activities in connection with the project on Implementation of Integrated Watershed Management Practices for the Pantanal and Upper Paraguay River Basin, executed in Brazil by the National Water Agency (ANA) with support from the USDE and the UNEP, and a GEF grant of US\$6.6million. Implemented using a new approach to product-based project management, 32 contracts were signed for execution of 31 subprojects. By a decision of the Executive Committee, the project-execution period was extended until November 2004.

During 2002, the project on Integrated Management of Land-based Activities in the São Francisco River Basin was executed with a GEF grant of US\$4.7 million and entered into its final phase of execution. Ten sub-projects were completed and the first draft of the Analytical Diagnostic was presented. The terms of reference for formulation of the Integrated Management Program (IMP) were also drawn up. As part of the project, thematic, technical and coordination workshops were held, as were two meetings of the Executive Committee. Activities were conducted to provide support to the São Francisco River Basin's Integrated Committee, which is to be officially inaugurated in December. The Executive Committee decided that the project-execution period would be extended to December 2003.

Also in Brazil, work continued on the project titled Program of Strategic Activities for the Amazon Basin (PRODEAM) and the project on Strengthening the Institutional Structure Shaping National Water Resource Policies in Brazil (SRH).

In 2002, execution of the project on Formulation of a Strategic Action Program for the Integrated Management of Water Resources and Sustainable Development of the San Juan River Basin and its Coastal Area (CRSJ) continued. The governments of Costa Rica and Nicaragua are conducting this project with a GEF grant of US\$4 million. Also during 2002, a series of events, workshops and thematic seminars were held. These included a Dialogue on Water and Climate, conducted in partnership with the International Secretariat of the Dialogue on Water and Climate of the 3rd World Water Forum with financing from the Government of the Netherlands in the amount of €2,616.

Under the project on "Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of the Guarani Aquifer System," a cooperation agreement was concluded between the OAS General Secretariat and the World Bank. The first of these institutions will serve as project executing agency, whereas the second will serve as project implementation agency, both in collaboration with the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay. The project will be carried out with GEF funding in the amount of US\$13.4 million. The project's total cost is US\$26.76 million. The bilateral agreements between the participating countries and the OAS General Secretariat were recently finalized, which means that the project's activities can officially get underway during the first quarter of 2003. In 2002, measures were taken to decide the location of project headquarters, tendering and selection of the project's Secretary General, formation of the Upper Executive Committee and preparation of the Technical-Financial Operations Manual (PIP).

By way of the Brazilian Agency for Cooperation, the Brazilian Government presented the agreement for the project "Plan of Action for Integrated Development of the Paranaíba Valley" (PLANAP), signed by the parties in February 2002. The government already made a payment of US\$2,000 for project start-up. With financing from the GEF's Block A, in the amount of US\$25,000, the USDE advised the five River Plate Basin countries to put together a proposal under the GEF's Block B, for US\$700,000. The proposal is for preparation of a "Framework Program for Water Resource Management in the River Plate Basin, to better cope with climate variability and change," and was approved by the Coordinating Inter-governmental Committee of the River Plate Basin Countries (CIC), by the five countries that signed the River Plate Basin Treaty (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay).

Inter-American Water Resources Network

The USDE continued to serve as the technical secretariat of the Inter-American Water Resources Network (IWRN), which makes possible permanent contact, a sharing of experiences and technical information relevant to the topic. The network has 34 national focal points designated by the member States. During the period under analysis, the Network was particularly active in preparing the Final Report of the IV Inter-American Dialogue on Water Management, held in Foz de Iguazú, Brazil in September 2001. The Unit also followed up on and supported the national dialogues on governability in water resource

management, conducted with funding from the Japanese Government under the Japan Water Resources Association in the amount of US\$177,000. Finally, as Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Water Resources Network (IWRN), support was provided for negotiations with the GEF and the UNEP for approval of the Medium-sized Project to Strengthen the Inter-American Water Resources Network. As reported elsewhere in this report, the project was approved with funding of US\$972,000.

Medium-sized Project to Strengthen the Inter-American Water Resources Network - IWRN

In September 2002, the GEF approved the project titled Development and Implementation of Mechanisms to Disseminate Lessons Learned and Best Practices in Integrated Transboundary Water Resources Management in Latin America and the Caribbean, submitted to the GEF by Brazil as co-Chair of the IWRN. With US\$972,000 in funding from the GEF, the project will last 18 months.

III World Water Forum – Day of the Americas

The USDE was on the Organizing Committee for Day of the Americas, which will be March 19, 2003, during the III World Water Forum in Japan. To that end, with US\$177,000 in funding from the Japan Water Resource Association, national dialogues were established on governability in water resource management.

Water Vision for the Caribbean

The project on “Achieving the Hemispheric Water Vision,” funded by the Japan Water Resources Association (JAWA) and executed by the Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment of the Organization of American States (USDE/OAS) with the assistance of the Caribbean Environment and Health Institute (CEHI), promotes the collaboration of civil society and government in accomplishing a hemispheric water vision of governance in water resource management.

One element of this project specifically pertains to the Caribbean and consists of two activities: 1) a pilot project in St. Vincent and the Grenadines on water resource policies; and 2) review of a document and a draft declaration and summary. Through the pilot project, technical assistance is being provided to the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to assist with harmonization and improvement of legislation and regulations currently governing water resources. The focus is on one priority area for St. Vincent and the Grenadines and sound regulations to govern waste management.

Mainstreaming Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC)

The project on Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change (CPACC) was completed in December 2001, at which point the participating countries requested a PDF-B grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in order to prepare the follow-up to the project, which is called Mainstreaming Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC).

To ensure the continuity of the region’s efforts to adapt to climate change, a grant of CDN\$3.2 million was assured by CARICOM for a project on Climate Change in the Caribbean.

The Unit is presently assisting CARICOM’s Secretariat with development of the implementation plan and preparation of the operations manual for the project on Mainstreaming Adaptation to Climate Change, and is also providing entries in the development of the project on Information Management Systems. The work is expected to be completed in February 2003.

Caribbean Dialogue on Water and Climate (CDWC)

The Caribbean Dialogue on Water and Climate (CDWC) was established to promote and coordinate policy discussion and action on water and climate among Caribbean countries. The forum provides a vehicle for disseminating information, sharing experiences, cooperating and communicating to address climate change and water resource management. Funded by the Netherlands-based International Secretariat for the Dialogue on Water and Climate, the Caribbean initiative is also designed to promote the exchange of information and experiences with small island states (SIDS) of the Pacific Region. CEHI and the OAS Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment are serving as the Dialogue convener and secretariat, respectively.

The first phase of the Dialogue covers the period from May 2002 to March 2003, the date of the III World Water Forum. Funding has been requested from the global Dialogue on Water and Climate (DWC) for this phase, on the understanding that the DWC will allow funding for the second phase to be requested before the first phase has been completed. During this first phase, the activities are: public awareness campaigns; consultations with the stakeholder; workshops; sites on the DWC's Internet page for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the Caribbean; and documents of interest about participating in the III World Water Forum. The Unit also designed the web site (www.oas.org/cdwc). Collaboration also began on the Small Island States Water and Climate Fact Sheet.

Caribbean disaster mitigation projects

In June 2002, the OAS and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) signed an agreement with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for the Caribbean Hazard Mitigation Capacity Building Project (CHAMP). That program is a three-year project involving upwards of US\$1.4 million, to go toward training CARICOM state officials in how to mitigate the risk of natural hazards. The first two components of this project are support for natural hazard mitigation development policies and implementation of sounder training. The project agreement was signed at the OAS General Assembly in June. The OAS/USDE will serve as executing agency and CDERA as project implementation agency.

Information for making decisions regarding sustainable development

The General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (SG/OAS) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) to serve as field management institution on a small project to be implemented in the Caribbean. The project is named "Capacity to create information tools for more informed decision-making about the sustainable development of the small island developing states (SIDS) of the Caribbean" involving a total of \$271,000.

One of the first activities scheduled is a mission to Barbados in December 2002, to meet with various international, regional and national organizations to discuss how the new project can dovetail with activities either already underway or on the drawingboard. The Unit for Sustainable Development and Environment will be working with a number of organizations in the region, among them the University of the West Indies.

Trade Corridors

The Inter-American Program for Training and Research for Trade Corridor Development (PROCORREDOR) continues to support regional training and research projects on related topics, in order to advise governments, consult with the private sector and prepare the next generation of specialists in the

development of trade corridors, with the emphasis on the transportation sector. The centers collaborating with PROCORREDOR, which include centers in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Peru, the United States and Uruguay, provided documents on experiences and activities. Those documents were then used at the Second Hemispheric Conference on Vulnerability Reduction of Trade Corridors to Socio-Natural Disasters (TCC II), held in Tampa, Florida, in June 2002. TCC III will be held in 2003, in Zamorano, Honduras.

Disaster reduction in the development context

The sixth phase of the project titled Flood Vulnerability Reduction and Development of Early Warning Systems in Minor River Basins in Central America (SVP) was launched in coordination with the Federation of Central American Isthmus Municipalities (FEMICA), the Coordination Center for Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC), and the Regional Hydraulic Resources Committee (CRRH). With support from the Government of the Netherlands, through the International Secretariat of the Dialogue on Water and Climate, the terms for setting up a Regional Platform for the SVP were established, whereby a consortium of NGOs will provide technical advisory services and training to local, national and regional groups interested in reducing the exposure to flooding. Plans are to use seed funds as a way to multiply the contributions received from the selected consortium. The DWC process has made it possible to bring the experiences of the OAS member States with water and climate to the attention of the III World Water Forum, to be held in Japan in March 2003.

One of the programs the USDE became involved in when responding to the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch in four Central American countries was the Water Level Observatory Network for Central America (RONMAC), financed by USAID through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

As part of the School Natural Hazard Vulnerability Reduction Program –EDUPLAN, the USDE continues to support the program's technical secretariats in Argentina, Costa Rica, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States and Venezuela, at the community, educational, administrative and/or geographic levels, in efforts to collaborate to voluntarily reduce schools' exposure to natural hazards through measures in the academic area, public participation and physical infrastructure.

In coordination with the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA), the CEPREDENAC, and the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), the USDE continues to help update the Study on the Vulnerability of Central American Roads to Natural Hazards and the process for Reciprocal Assistance in the Event of Damage to the Transportation Infrastructure from Natural Disasters in Central America.

Renewable energy in the Americas

The USDE serves as technical secretariat of the Renewable Energy in the Americas (REIA) Program. In 2002, REIA undertook a series of new initiatives and broadened the scope of some of the activities already underway. In conjunction with the World Bank, it administers a hemispheric alliance that serves as a catalyst to bring modern energy services into rural, low-income areas of Latin America and the Caribbean. The global sustainable energy alliance –Latin America and the Caribbean (GVERP-LAC) - will be beneficial to numerous national strategies for rural energy development and will help steer technical and financial assistance resources toward execution of such programs. Following up on the adoption of the Sustainable Energy Plan in Saint Lucia, in 2001 the REIA began working with Dominica and Grenada to devise similar strategies, which can be used as maps for the transformation of energy sectors through the use of sustainable energy technologies (renewable energy and energy output systems). The REIA is also promoting technical assistance to various countries -the Dominican Republic and

Guatemala among them- for analysis and development of renewable energy policies. Through its partnership with the IACD, the REIA continues to assist with the development of rural telecommunications and energy projects. En el 2002, as a result of an OAS-financed pilot project designed by the REIA and the IACD, the Inter-American Development Bank provided Honduras with a loan of \$8.5 million for the National Rural Connectivity and Energy Initiatives.

Virtual Office of the Inter-Summit Property Systems Initiative

As a result of the Second Summit of the Americas (Chile 1998) and in response to the property records mandates in the Santiago Plan of Action, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in partnership with the OAS, created the Virtual Office of the Inter-Summit Property Systems Initiative. During the Summit, member States expressed their commitment to organize and standardize their own national property records systems. Accordingly, the purpose of the Virtual Office of the Inter-Summit Property Systems Initiative is to offer extensive assistance in the form of information at its portal at www.property-registration.org, for the efforts that are now being made to overhaul some aspects of the property records system.

INTER-SECTORAL UNIT FOR TOURISM

Established by Executive Order 96-7, the Inter-sectoral Unit for Tourism promotes interdisciplinary tourism development, strengthens and stabilizes practical cooperation with other regional and international organizations, revitalizes the Inter-American Travel Congress (CIT), and directs technical cooperation and training programs to promote sustainable development in the member states.

Formulation of policies and plans

As part of the emergency response program designed to help the tourism sectors in the Caribbean member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) whose tourism sectors and economies suffered from the severe slowdown in 2001, in 2002 the Inter-Sectoral Unit for Tourism (UTUR) provided Dominica with consulting services to help it revitalize its tourism sector.

Development of tourism products

The USAID-funded Small Tourism Enterprises Project (STEP) was put together in response to the poor performance and profits that are virtually the norm within the small hotel subsector. It is also because market demands indicate that attention must be devoted to environmental factors when designing and operating tourism businesses. During the period under consideration, the following was done under the various components of the STEP project:

Creation of the Caribbean Experiences brands and standards for hotels and related tourism businesses.

In 2002, the UTUR conducted an important series of product tests for the Caribbean Experiences brands and standards, involving some 450 small hotels in the participating countries. Seminars were organized in the seven participating countries for 120 hotel owners and managers. The Unit did follow-up checks with the small-hotel owners, prepared a report on the product launch and obtained information to fine-tune the Caribbean Experiences approach. The exercise will also help improve the structure of integration and be useful in preparing the *Caribbean Experiences* business plan project.

Tourism sites, attractions and community tourism

The Tourism Sites and Attractions component of the STEP project was launched with preparation of a list of 26 attractions (15 in Saint Lucia and 11 in Barbados). The UTUR also began talks with the Canadian International Development Agency's Caribbean Regional Human Resource Development Program for Economic Competitiveness (CIDA-CPEC), to jointly disseminate the development standards and community tourism activities.

One important feature of the initiatives involving tourism sites, attractions and community tourism is the potential that events and festivals have to add value to the tourism product and increase the member States' tourism revenues. To underscore this potential, the UTUR organized a regional seminar on event planning and management. The seminar, held November 4 through 6, 2002, was attended by more than 60 event managers and organizers.

Creation of an Internet site for managers of tourism attractions

The staff of the UTUR and a NetCorps volunteer created a new Web site for owners and managers of tourism sites, attractions and community tourism projects. The site is being studied and will be released to the public early in 2003.

Development of an environmental management system

The UTUR worked with staff from USAID and *Caribbean Action for Sustainable Tourism (CAST)* on formulation of a program of environmental courses of action for small hotels as a first step in a series of technical initiatives to help small properties implement environmental management systems. By December 31, 2002, 60 courses of action will have been completed and more than 160 hoteliers will have made contact with environmental management programs. By the end of 2002, more than 1700 people and 400 organizations will have had contact with these initiatives from the time the program started.

Information and technology transfer systems

Creation of an Internet-based medium

UTUR created a digital tool to provide commercial visibility to the hotels and other businesses participating in the STEP program. The core of the project is a registered Internet portal, *Caribbeanexperiences.com*, which hotels and other tourism businesses can use to advertise on the Internet. In 2002, the UTUR hired a tourism reservations service to start setting up the portal and the reservation service, before *Caribbean Experiences* is launched. The portal will be ready by December 2002 and test runs will begin early in 2003.

Delivery of technological assistance

The program to deliver technological assistance to small tourism businesses has proven to be a tremendous success among the small hotel community. In 2002, thanks to collaboration with the Net Corps Americas and Net Corps Canada programs, training was delivered to more than 65 properties and 162 employees in 8 member States. Also, through collaboration with the Canadian Executive Service Overseas (CESO), volunteers assisted some 30 hotels with hotel management, operations, food and beverages.

Creation of an on-line virtual resource center, “CaribbeanInnkeeper.com”

In 2002, the UTUR began to update and fine-tune the virtual resource center at the Web page *CaribbeanInnkeeper.com*. This involved adding information and services related to training programs, equipment, tools and materials now available through the STEP project. This project gives hotel operators, researchers, students and personnel in the sector a significant amount of information relevant to the operation of tourism businesses, information they can access via the Internet.

Creation of walk-in resource centers

The virtual resource center at *CaribbeanInnkeeper.com* will be matched by walk-in resource centers in the countries participating in the STEP project. These centers, which will serve as a primary vehicle for introducing the STEP project in the participating States, will offer training materials, a video library for small hotels, a facility for TV and video projection, Internet access and pamphlets. They will also make available CAST's information about its programs and the brochures on environmental management prepared for the STEP program. By the end of 2002, resource centers will have been established in 8 member States; another 5 will be ready early in 2003. The UTUR also organized a “mobile” resource center that will be used in larger countries like Guyana and the Bahamas, so that the project reaches small properties beyond the principal centers of tourism.

Preparation of instructive pamphlets

The purpose of the pamphlets is to present the operating practices and best practices in the sector, both in electronic format and in print. The goal is that the best practices illustrated in the pamphlets will make tourism businesses more efficient and profitable. In 2001 and 2002, 17 pamphlets were prepared on a variety of business-related issues, among them environmental conservation, energy management, room improvements, businesses, rapid solutions, maintenance, room service and positioning in the market.

Education and training

Certification for workers in the sector

In 2002, the UTUR collaborated with the CIDA's CEPC and the *American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA)* to prepare and adapt training materials and food-service certification and room service for small hotels. With the permission of the AHLA, this material was made available at the start of the year, for a number of hotel owners, regional experts and instructors to test the products. All the participants agreed that the instructive materials were well adapted to small hotels' needs. In mid 2002, 75 educators participated in seminars providing training to instructors in AHLA training certification using the adapted material. A team of instructors is essential to achieve the goal for 2003, which is to train 500 hotel staff.

Instructive manuals for schools

In keeping with the mandate from the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Tourism Development, the Unit, working with the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), wrapped up the following activities: a) major development of the Tourism Learning System for the Caribbean, in cooperation with Canadian counterparts, to consolidate and coordinate the tourism education and training activities in the region; b) implementation of seminars and activities to promote and introduce tourism modules in the school systems in the region, modules that were developed as part of OAS-financed activities in 2001; and c) implementation of tourism awareness activities in the region.

Institution- and capacity-building

Convinced that effective implementation of the STEP project will depend upon the capacity of the counterpart coordinators participating in the member States, training courses were organized in 2002 for STEP coordinators, who were trained in environmental awareness, environmental assessment, hotel management, food services and health and food safety precautions. The coordinators also participated in a training and certification program for small hotels and the communications media. The program was conducted with the assistance of Loyola University.

The Unit's activities in Central America

During the last year, the Unit provided assistance to the following tourism projects in Central America:

Regional small hotel assistance projects

The regional projects to assist small hotels involved six OAS member States (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama) to provide advisory services to enhance their competitiveness. Implementation was held up for almost all of 2002 owing to the executing agency's institutional problems. However, the UTUR was able to introduce a change in the agreements on financing and executing agencies in the last quarter of the year in order to effect the first disbursement of

funding to the Caribbean Small Tourism Enterprises Project. By year's end, the diagnostic study of the sector's problems was partially complete.

Coffee Tourism Route Project

The goal of the Coffee Tourism Route Project is to generate tourism benefits in the Los Santos region by using a native product like coffee. This project will help diversify the region's predominantly coffee-based economy and strengthen its assets and culture. A pilot project is being conducted in Costa Rica. Cooperation is also being provided to similar undertakings in Nicaragua and Guatemala. During the year, a list of tourism products was put together, a community awareness program launched, and a study of the pilot products undertaken with tourism operators and agencies and possible counterparts. Marketing and advertising activities were conducted toward year's end.

Other activities in Latin America

During the period under consideration, UTUR staff participated in the IV National Congress of Legislative Committees on Tourism and Economic Development, held in Acapulco, Mexico, in February. There they presented a document on the Growth of Tourism in Latin America – Current trends and prospects.

Staff of the Unit had talks with the Director of the OAS Office in Uruguay, to obtain that office's assistance in identifying opportunities for the Unit's tourism development program in the region.

Research to use in formulating policies and programs

Research was done on a project to involve the indigenous peoples of Dominica, St. Vincent and Belize in the tourism sector. The report on the study is being used in designing a project for funding. The project will be included in the UTUR work program.

Research has been conducted on a project to maximize the benefits and economic return from sports tourism. The report on the study was used as the principal reference at a symposium held in Grenada in November.

Projects approved by the Permanent Council in October 2001 got underway. These projects are intended to help the tourism sectors of the member States whose economies suffered a serious slowdown that year. The activities conducted were in the following areas: marketing, planning and development of products; technical assistance to the small hotels subsector; establishment of resource centers and formulation of a short-term plan for reactivation of tourism in Dominica.

Institutional mechanisms

In the period under consideration, the Inter-Sectoral Unit for Tourism participated in discussions with various institutions in the area, including the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, the Caribbean Hotel Association, Caribbean Action for Sustainable Development, the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC), George Washington University, Loyola University, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the European Investment Bank, and the Canadian International Development Agency's Caribbean Regional Human Resource Development Program for Economic Competitiveness (CIDA-CPEC). The Unit also concluded the substantive preparations for the XVIII Inter-American Travel Congress. However, the Congress was postponed until mid 2003; it had originally been slated for September 2002.

Funding

To secure funding for parts of the UTUR work program, during the year talks were conducted with the Inter-American Development Bank's Multilateral Investment Fund, the World Bank's International Finance Corporation, the European Investment Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, the Bank of Nova Scotia and the Canadian International Development Agency.

UNIT FOR THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY

Established through Executive Order No. 90-3, of October 15, 1990, pursuant to General Assembly resolution AG/RES. 1063 (XX-O/90), the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD) was created to put into practice a program of assistance to help preserve and strengthen member states' democratic political institutions and procedures. The Unit carries out its work plan under the Program of Support for the Promotion of Democracy, which the Permanent Council approved in its resolution CP/RES. 572 (882/91).

Office of the Executive Coordinator

In 2002, the Office of the Executive Coordinator coordinated and spearheaded the Unit's work, both to ensure fulfillment of the work program and to meet the various needs that arose during the year.

The Office of the Executive Coordinator also headed up the Unit's work in connection with the Inter-American Forum on Political Parties. The Forum was created in Miami in December 2001, with the support of more than a hundred representatives of various political organizations in the hemisphere and the most important international organizations that in one way or another work with political parties. In 2002, the Forum has succeeded in establishing itself as a venue to meet and promote initiatives to improve the quality of the party systems and political parties of the region.

In August 2002, the Inter-American Forum on Political Parties held a workshop in Santiago, Chile. It brought together international groupings of political parties, institutes and foundations, thus giving the Forum an opportunity to partner with the principal international groupings of party representation to engage in joint undertakings. A study was launched in the 34 countries of the Hemisphere on political financing. A group of high-level experts was convened for a workshop in Costa Rica in October, where the parameters of the study were determined. Finally, in December 2002, Vancouver was the site of the Forum's second meeting, where some of the most important political leaders of the hemisphere convened to converse and share their views on issues related to political finance and reform. The IAFPP's Vancouver meeting also saw the creation of the Forum's Advisory Council, whose members include some of the most important figures involved in strengthening the party systems in the hemisphere. It will help steer the Forum and keep it on track to meet its future objectives.

Strategic programs for strengthening democracy

To facilitate a sharing of experiences and ideas and to further inter-parliamentary cooperation, in 2002 the Program on Strengthening Legislative Institutions (PAFIL) helped organize the first meeting of the Inter-parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA). The venue for the meeting was the Congressional Building in Mexico City. Also, in collaboration with the Andean Parliament, the program was instrumental in staging a seminar on the role of political parties and congresses in the political reform of the Andean countries, held in Colombia's Congress Building. It also provided advisory assistance to MERCOSUR's Joint Parliamentary Commission for the launch of the *Inter-parliamentary Legislative Information Network*. Also, in keeping with the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism and in support of the Forum of the Heads of the Legislative Branches of Government in Central America (FOPREL), the program assisted an initiative involving Central American inter-parliamentary cooperation to devise a regional legislative strategy and bring current the related domestic laws. It also provided assistance to members of the United States Congress and Venezuela's National Assembly in organizing the Inter-parliamentary Forum between the two countries, held in Brewster, Massachusetts in September 2002.

A study on “*Congresos y Procuradores de Derechos Humanos en la Protección de los Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales en Centro América*” [Congresses and State’s Attorneys for Human Rights in the Protection of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Central America] was completed, as part of the mission of discovering and reporting new facts about the role of the legislative branch in a democracy. A program targeted at parliamentarians was also concluded that focused on press relations strategies. A study was undertaken on best parliamentary practices in relations between the legislative branch of government and civil society, and in the field of legislative information sciences and legislative advisory systems. Work also started on preparation of the Manual of Legislative Techniques for Parliaments in the Hemisphere, and the study on the “Budget Process and Political Control in the Andean Region.”

To promote better understanding of the role that the legislative branch plays in a democracy, the “IV MERCOSUR Regional Course, the Legislative Branch of Government in a Democracy and Integration” was conducted in cooperation with the Congress of the Republic of Brazil. Participating were some fifty young people from the region’s political parties, national and provincial congresses, municipal councils, and other such bodies.

During this same period, technical assistance was provided to devise legislative modernization programs for the Congress of the Province of Cordoba, Argentina, and the Congresses of the Dominican Republic and Bolivia.

In 2002, through its Program to Support Decentralization and Citizen Participation Processes, the UPD continued to support the member States’ efforts to strengthen the legal and institutional framework in this area. Ever since the 2001 creation of the High-level Inter-American Network on Decentralization, Local Government and Citizen Participation (RIAD) within the OAS and in response to the commitments undertaken in this area at the Summits of the Americas, the Program has focused on supporting the activities of this new vehicle of hemispheric cooperation. As RIAD’s technical secretariat, the UPD collaborated with RIAD’s Chair Pro Tempore and Vice Chair Pro Tempore, which are Bolivia and Mexico, respectively, on planning the Network’s activities. The UPD collaborated with the Government of Mexico to hold a specialized workshop and to organize a working meeting in Cancun, Mexico, where RIAD’s members decided what its priority areas would be.

As requested by the Specialized Meeting of MERCOSUR Municipalities and Intendencias (REMI), a specialized subregional body, the UPD collaborated with MERCOSUR in holding a subregional forum on decentralization and local government in Mar del Plata, Argentina, and provided technical assistance to organize studies on decentralization and local autonomy in the MERCOSUR subregion. In the Andean region, at the Peruvian government’s request the UPD was one of the international co-sponsors of a seminar on decentralization and regional development, held in Lima, Peru. Its purpose was to help further decentralization in that country.

In Central America, a technical cooperation agreement was concluded with the Inter-American Development Program for the program “Support to Strengthen Political Decentralization in Central America,” which will help build the central governments’ capacity to devise and implement decentralization policies. Its theme and method were introduced and examined at a high-level subregional seminar on “The Political Dimension of Decentralization,” held in the Dominican Republic with the sponsorship and collaboration of the National Council for State Reform and the World Bank.

In keeping with the specific mandates from the Inter-American Demographic Charter on “Promotion of a Democratic Culture,” the Program for Promotion of Democratic Leadership and Citizenry continued to offer its assistance for regional and national courses teaching the young leaders of the hemisphere about democratic institutions, values and practices.

In cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Inter-American Commission of Women, the “First Central American Course for Young Women Leaders on Democratic Governance” was held in Managua, Nicaragua in May 2002. Participating were some 30 prominent young women from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, representing the sectors that shape public opinion, such as political parties, nongovernmental organizations, the press and academia. In cooperation with the Political Science Institute of the Universidad de la República del Uruguay and with the sponsorship of the Uruguayan Congress, the “First Regional Course on Democracy and Political Management” was held, attended by some forty young leaders from the MERCOSUR subregion’s political parties, electoral bodies, congresses, municipalities and media.

The program of national courses for Training Democratic Leaders (CALIDEM) about democratic institutions, values and practices was set up with IDB financial support. Its purpose is to help form a democratic leadership in countries of the hemisphere. Two national courses were conducted under this program, one in Peru and the other in Paraguay. National courses in Ecuador and Guyana are scheduled, as is a subregional course for Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis.

Finally, in cooperation with the United States Center for Civic Education, the UPD started work on the design of a series of workshops to train teachers in normal schools and officials from the ministries of education, the goal being to promote instruction in democratic values and practices within the educational system.

Strengthening of electoral processes and systems

In 2002, the area responded to various mandates and directives concerning elections-related matters by providing advisory services and technical assistance and conducting research on how the electoral systems of the hemisphere might be strengthened.

In Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras and Paraguay, support was provided in 2002 for the efforts of those governments to strengthen their countries’ electoral systems. The Unit helped design concrete measures and strategies aimed at promoting the use of better instruments and procedures in the area of electoral organization.

In countries in the Andean region, Central America and the Caribbean, the Unit continued the programs to modernize and automate electoral mechanisms using leading-edge technology developed by experts from the area. A Cooperation Agreement was signed with Ecuador’s Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), for providing advisory assistance to the TSE to help it develop systems for vote tabulation, appointments, and reporting of results during the election process that culminated with the election of the President and Vice President in November 2002.

In those same regions, the Unit worked on developing and implementing civil registry programs, the basic objective being to organize the records, evaluate administrative structures, conduct studies on possible amendments to the pertinent laws, provide technological support for registration, notification and control procedures, provide training to registry officials, conduct promotional campaigns about the uses of the statistical data, and redefine the system’s objectives.

Based on the Area’s first experience in horizontal cooperation between the hemisphere’s electoral bodies (Brazil-Paraguay) in July 2002, the General Secretariat and Brazil’s Superior Electoral Tribunal concluded a framework cooperation agreement to regulate and implement future pilot programs in electronic voting in the member countries that so request. The main objective of these pilot plans is to enable the countries to test the electronic voting mechanism, which tends to facilitate the work of the

members of the voting table and speed up the transmission of election results. In December, the General Secretariat received a request from Paraguay's Electoral Court to conduct a new pilot plan during the general elections slated for Paraguay in April 2003. At the present time, the UPD is taking the steps necessary to begin the project in January 2003.

In the area of horizontal cooperation, in December the Unit held a meeting in preparation for the Inter-American Conference of Electoral Authorities, which will take place in Panama in March 2003. Attending this preparatory meeting were representatives of the electoral bodies of Brazil, Canada, Mexico and Panama. At the meeting, the General Secretariat and Panama's Electoral Tribunal signed a cooperation agreement.

In the field of citizen participation in elections and civic education about voting, the Unit cooperated with Guatemala's Superior Electoral Tribunal in 2002 to stage workshops and seminars, and a media campaign was designed to help consolidate the democratic and participatory culture in the country.

In the first quarter of 2002, the Unit cooperated with Colombia's National Electoral Council and the Universidad Sergio Arboleda to organize the Forum on Democratic Culture and Electoral Tolerance, held in Bogota.

Information and dialogue on democracy

In both electronic and print formats, the UPD generated and disseminated information about its activities and the general theme of democratic development in the hemisphere, in order to make more critical, detailed and timely data on this topic available and get it to a wider audience. The UPD increased the information available on its Internet page, and created very complete and up-to-date pages for all the electoral observation missions conducted by the Organization and many of the Unit's special programs.

The UPD also updated the democracy-related databases and continues to work with Georgetown University's Center for Latin American States to build up the Database of the Americas.

The Unit has put enormous effort into producing promotional materials to disseminate information about its activities and programs. As a result, a number of CD ROMs and pamphlets were produced in English and Spanish and distributed to the Permanent Missions and Observer Missions, the OAS General Secretariat, and other institutions and individuals interested in the region's democratic development.

The Unit published reports on the electoral observation missions and special reports, as well as reports on UPD activities and seminars.

During 2002, emphasis was placed on promoting and disseminating the contents of the Inter-American Democratic Charter that the member States approved in September 2001. For example, a passport-sized version of the Inter-American Democratic Charter was published in the OAS' four official languages, featuring an introduction by the Secretary General. Those were distributed through the Organization's Offices, Permanent and Observer Missions, and at various UPD events, missions and programs in the member countries. The UPD provided support to a seminar on the Inter-American Democratic Charter in Montevideo, November 26 and 27, in partnership with the Uruguayan Foreign Ministry and the OAS Office in Uruguay. It also participated in an event sponsored by the Government of Peru, Transparency International and other agencies in September 2002, to commemorate the first anniversary of the approval of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. In 2002, the UPD also staged an event at Organization headquarters to analyze the Charter and its ramifications. That event was attended by the President of Peru, the Honorable Alejandro Toledo, as well as distinguished international experts.

Under the umbrella of the Democratic Forum, the Unit conducted a number of events during the year to further the discussion and debate of issues related to democratic development in the hemisphere. A seminar was held in Barbados, January 20 through 22, on Constitutional Reform in the Caribbean. On September 16, Washington, D.C. was the venue for a forum to celebrate the first anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Lastly, on November 25, the UPD was instrumental in organizing a special meeting of the Permanent Council on Women's Participation in Political Processes.

Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines (AICMA)

As part of its mandate to support national reconciliation and the strengthening of the peace, the program on Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines (AICMA) continued to support anti-mine activities in the hemisphere and to support observance of the Ottawa Convention by its signatory States. The AICMA was particularly active in assisting demining activities in Central America, specifically in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, as well as Peru and Ecuador.

As part of the humanitarian demining component, the program assisted the member States' efforts in removing more than 19 thousand planted mines. In October 2002, Costa Rica completed its demining operations, which enabled it to declare itself mine-free. During the course of this year, Nicaragua, the most affected country in Central America, reached 60% of its goal of eliminating all antipersonnel mines laid in its territory. The program's activities in Honduras are now in their final stages, and the Honduran, Guatemalan, and Nicaraguan programs are expected to be completed in 2003, 2004 and 2005, respectively. In August 2002, coordinated demining operations got underway on both sides of the border between Peru and Ecuador.

The OAS' leadership in support of the Ottawa Convention ("Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction") was also apparent in the assistance that the AICMA program provided for the destruction of mines stockpiled in various member States. In August 2002, Nicaragua joined Ecuador, Honduras and Peru as a country free of mine stockpiles. The final stage is all that remains, which is the destruction of 136,000 mines in its arsenals. This year, the Government of Colombia requested the OAS' technical and financial assistance to comply with its obligations under the Ottawa Convention. Efforts got underway to coordinate a framework agreement for the AICMA program's support in preventive education, assistance to victims, and establishment and maintenance of a data bank.

For comprehensive coverage of the affected population's needs, support continued to be provided to the Care Program for Victims of Mines and Unexploded Ordnance, which has helped some 400 victims in Central America, most in Nicaragua. In 2002, the scope of the assistance to mine victims was broadened through a pilot program for post-rehabilitation job training. This program was done in cooperation with Nicaragua's National Institute of Technology. Initially plans are to train 55 rehabilitated victims in the first year; that figure could double in the second year.

With support from the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining, the AICMA program fine-tuned implementation of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) in Nicaragua, as the system was being put into place in Ecuador and Peru. IMSMA serves as a primary data bank for prioritizing demining activities, preventive education, and victims' assistance efforts and will be used to develop a detailed study of the socioeconomic impact of mines on the affected regions.

Special programs

Special programs include the Organization's Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs), which is one of the most visible undertakings of the UPD and have more immediate impact. Throughout 2002, and at the

request of the respective governments, the UPD organized and conducted Electoral Observation Missions in Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Peru. Those Missions significantly added to the transparency of the respective electoral processes and bolstered voter confidence in them.

Established in 2000, the Special Program on Conflict Resolution and Promotion of Dialogue makes available to the member States and the Organization conceptual frames of reference, methods, mechanisms, and specialized human resources in the areas of promotion of dialogue, conflict resolution, and consensus building, all of which have been tested in the field and honed through initiatives undertaken in various countries of the hemisphere. This Special Program's activities include support for initiatives by governments and civil society aimed at promoting dialogue, building consensus and peacefully settling social conflicts.

Prominent among the activities carried out in 2002 was the technical support that the UPD provided to the General Secretariat in its efforts at political negotiation and mediation to resolve the political impasse in Venezuela.

In the second half of 2002, the Special Program supported establishment of the Central American Program (PCA) to prevent and settle conflicts. It seeks to promote socio-political dialogue on matters of mutual interest for the region, and to strengthen local, national and subregional strategies for dealing with these matters. It also works to develop a regional infrastructure to facilitate processes and establish mechanisms to manage conflicts between national, regional and local counterparts, mechanisms that work in the area of consensus building, dialogue and democratic governability in Central America.

During 2002, support was also provided to the last phase of implementation of the Program on the "Culture of Dialogue: Development of Resources for Peacebuilding (OAS/PROPAZ) in Guatemala," whose activities focused on institutionalizing the program and transforming it into a completely Guatemalan foundation, the ProPaz Foundation. Expectations are that the ProPaz Foundation will be established by the first quarter of 2003, thereby continuing to support the peace process, political dialogue and democratic development in Guatemala. The goal here is to transfer the skills of the OAS-PROPAZ program, its mandates, resources, methods and conceptual frames of reference to this national institution.

Finally, in partnership with the *Peacebuilding and Development Summer Institute* at American University, the Special Program successfully coordinated a course titled "Peacebuilding and Development in Conflict Areas." The purpose of the course was to provide practical skills and knowledge as well as field experience to international functionaries, government officials and members of civil society who work in the area of conflict resolution. The program covered different approaches to mediation, negotiation, reconciliation and dialogue, particularly in developing regions where conflictive levels run higher. Participants in these training sessions also explored the relationship of religion, culture and gender to the work of peacebuilding and development.

The technical cooperation programs for Peace and Reinsertion (including the "Hijos de Rio" Addendum) and Self-help Housing Construction in Nicaragua continued during 2002, completing the program of activities planned for this period. The programs succeeded in supplying beneficiary populations with infrastructure and installed capacity appropriate to each operating framework.

The National Governability Program (PRONAGOB), a specialized agency in Bolivia, and the Modernization of the Civil Register Program (MORECIV), a specialized agency in Paraguay, conducted all procedures planned in connection with the competitive bidding for and letting of contracts on goods and selection of personnel, as well as coordination among the government institutions associated with the corresponding programs. These activities are intended to strengthen the transparency of processes of this

type, an initiative supported by the OAS and the Inter-American Development Bank (BID), the latter being the institution in charge of the financing. The activities of the specialized agency in Bolivia ended in August 2002 with the approval of the Governability Committee that has directed the program since 1996.

On July 18, 2001, the OAS General Secretariat and the Government of Guatemala signed a framework agreement establishing the OAS Program for Strengthening Democratic Institutions in Guatemala. That program focuses on four areas: electoral technical support, training and support in conflict resolution, promotion of democratic values and political management, and demining. The UPD has received substantial funding to help the recently appointed Supreme Electoral Tribunal with preparation of the general elections slated for the second half of 2003 and continues to support this institution's efforts to design and conduct civic education and get-out-the-vote campaigns. The mine-clearing activities in Guatemala, already discussed in the section on the AICMA Program, have been completed in the department of San Marcos, the second most affected area according to the National Demining Plan. Next year, demining will begin in the area of Huehuetenango. Overall, demining operations in Guatemala are expected to be finished in 2004.

Working jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the OAS/PROPAZ Program continued to assist important efforts at dialogue and consensus building in Guatemala, mainly with development of the "intersectoral tables" associated with the commitments undertaken in the Peace Accords. With the Program of Democratic Values and Political Management, the UPD endeavors to help modernize the political parties and party systems in Guatemala through training, seminars and applied research. The project is part of an even broader UPD effort, mentioned earlier and conducted within the hemisphere, to support reform and modernization of parties and party systems under the *Inter-American Forum on Political Parties*.