EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT

Established by Executive Order 05-13 Rev. 1, the structure of SEDI is made up of the Office of the Executive Secretary and the Departments of Follow-up, Policies and Programs; Education, Culture, Science, and Technology; Trade, Tourism, and Competitiveness; Sustainable Development; and Social Development and Employment.

Office of the Executive Secretary

In 2005, SEDI, through its executive office, continued to support the policy programs within the framework of the CIDI by actively coordinating with the various offices of the Secretariat. It also persisted in its efforts to implement programs and marshal external funds to support the efforts that the countries are making for their own development and that of the region.

The main thrusts this year, which was one of institutional transition, were the activities described under each department, section and program. An important development in 2005 was the consolidation of the Development Innovations and Alliances Program, conceived as a new strategy for horizontal cooperation among the governments of the region, which at the same time enlists greater private sector participation and implements agreements with the private sector.

New Cooperation Mechanisms

The initiatives conducted under the Innovations and Alliances Program rest upon three pillars: horizontal cooperation; private sector participation; and training and capacity building. The projects focus mainly on e-government and municipal development, but include other issues as well, such as corporate social responsibility and computer recycling. The program's activities are supported by various areas of the General Secretariat and by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas (ICA) and the Andean Development Corporation (CAF).

The results in the area of e-government came mainly from the activities of Red GEALC and the training provided through the online course in e-government. The Red GEALC (Network of e-Government Leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean) was further consolidated in 2005. The Network now boasts active representatives from 31 countries, a Web portal (www.redgealc.net) and two regional promoters. As part of the Network's activities, 14 experts from 12 countries were assembled and e-government workshops were organized in the Caribbean (Trinidad and Tobago) and Ottawa. The first brought together 13 e-government officials from the various countries of the Caribbean, while the Ottawa workshop was attended by 29 e-government officials from Latin America and the Caribbean.

As for training, by the end of 2005 the online course in e-government had trained over 1,000 people from all the OAS' subregions. The strategic partnership with the ICA was significantly stronger thanks to the support it provided to most of the e-government activities. Under an agreement with Microsoft, assistance was provided for a number of e-government activities being conducted by governments in the region.

Under the program of the Municipal Network of Efficient and Transparent Municipalities (MuNet), following the MuNet workshop on municipal e-government (Caracas) the program began to work directly with 21 municipalities in the Andean and Central American regions to devise e-government strategies with the aid of local consultants. These strategies have been formally presented to the mayors in some 70% of the participating municipalities. Furthermore, 200 officials of those municipalities were trained through the aforementioned course in e-government. SEDI has created a municipal e-government portal,

which the municipalities in the MuNet Program are testing. By implementing specific initiatives in e-government, those municipalities will become part of the information society.

The municipal development area focused on the activities of the MuNet Program that seek to build up municipal capacities in the two major areas of cadastre/registration and e-government, with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Andean Development Corporation (CAF) and the partnership with Stewart Information International.

In the area of cadastre/registration, the MuNet convocation was issued inviting proposals in the area of Cadastre and Registration. Five countries (Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru and Venezuela) were selected to receive seed funds to begin work in 2006. In the area of information sharing, more than 500 copies of the CD containing the final reports of the OAS' 2004 workshop on cadastre and registration were produced and circulated. With the support of the ICA, a virtual discussion group was created on the subject of cadastre and registration with over 160 experts and practitioners from across Latin America and the Caribbean participating. As for MuNet training, experts from the region and the Office of Mayor of Gijón, Spain partnered with the program to produce more than 500 CDs of the self-study course on "Cadastral Management" to help improve government management. Those CDs have been distributed to municipalities, municipal associations and other organizations in the region. Finally, under the agreement concluded with Stewart Information International, an integrated geographic information system was implemented for tax management, land records and tax collection in Antigua and Barbuda. This project was introduced to the countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in September, to explore the possibilities of replicating it elsewhere in this Caribbean subregion.

Under the "Computers for Communities" program, conducted with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the OAS, in cooperation with ICA and Industry Canada (IC), coordinated a final regional workshop for the Caribbean, held in Kingston (February 2005). The program has a web site to provide information and enable interested persons to share information and experiences (www.cpc-cfc.net).

In the area of corporate social responsibility, the program conducted jointly by the IACD and the Foro EMPRESA and approved by the IDB's Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) and CIDA, bolstered its operations in 2005 with training activities targeting groups and member businesses, particularly in the pilot countries (Chile, Peru, Brazil, El Salvador). It also disseminated information on corporate social responsibility throughout the region.

Department of Follow-Up, Policies and Programs

Established by Executive Order 05-13 Rev. 1, the DSPP has two sections. The first is the Ministerial Meetings Follow-up Section, which serves as Secretariat of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI). The second is the Program and Project Evaluation Section, which is responsible for administering and evaluating the Special Multilateral Fund of CIDI (FEMCIDI) and other projects and activities in partnership for development.

Ministerial Meetings Follow-Up

This Section coordinated the activities to follow up on the mandates from the General Assembly, the Tenth Regular Meeting of CIDI, and those adopted at the various sectoral meetings, either in the form of ministerials or meetings of inter-American committees.

In collaboration with other offices of the General Secretariat, the section assisted with the planning, coordination, preparatory work and actual holding of the following sectoral meetings: the Second Meeting

of the Inter-American Committee on Education; the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Culture and Highest Appropriate Authorities; the First Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Science and Technology, and the Fourteenth Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor. A more detailed list of the agreements that the member states adopted at each of these meetings appears in the sections corresponding to each sectoral area of SEDI.

As Secretariat of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), the Section planned and coordinated the Tenth Regular Meeting of CIDI. In preparation for this meeting, the DSPP organized the meetings of various bodies and prepared reports and technical papers on topics within its area of competence. It also contributed to the exchange of specialized information related to cooperation policies in the priority areas of the Strategic Plan that figured on CIDI's agenda.

Lastly, the Section was responsible for assisting with the Board's work by processing electronic inquiries regarding management of the technical cooperation projects financed with resources from the Special Multilateral Fund of CIDI (FEMCIDI).

Program and Project Evaluation

- Programming of the Special Multilateral Fund of CIDI (FEMCIDI) 2004

The Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) prepared the document titled "Preliminary Proposed Programming of Partnership Activities FEMCIDI 2004," which included 109 project proposals submitted by 31 member countries. The total amount requested for those projects was US$ 11,863,018. The member States' contributions to FEMCIDI 2004 totaled US $7,873,028.80.

The Proposed Programming document, together with the documents pertaining to the projects included therein (the complete project proposal, progress reports, work programs, and so on), was sent to the members of the Nonpermanent Specialized Committees (CENPES) early in the year. The CENPES meeting for the FEMCIDI 2004 programming cycle took place on May 3 through 5, 2005. The 33 members of the eight committees evaluated the projects and presented their recommendations to the IACD Management Board in June 2005.

The document "Programming of Partnership for Development Activities: FEMCIDI 2004" containing the CENPES recommendations was approved by the IACD Management Board in June 2005. Ninety-two (92) projects --52 multinational and 40 national-- were approved for a total of US $7,598.967.52. To finance the FEMCIDI 2004 programming cycle, the Management Board also authorized the use of the interest accrued between January 2004 and April 2005, non-programmed funds and a portion of the FEMCIDI 2002 Reserve Account, in addition to the net contributions to FEMCIDI 2004.

The following list shows the number of projects by area and the distribution of the resources:
- Trade: 9 projects for US $815,575
- Social Development: 15 projects for US $1,061,280
- Education: 27 projects for US $ 2,363,005
- Culture: 3 projects for US $126,048.52
- Science and Technology: 16 projects for US $1,601,000
- Democracy: 4 projects for US $122,779
- Tourism: 6 projects for US $622,679
- Environment: 11 projects for US $ 819,917
- Integral Development: 1 project for US $66,583

The Management Board's decision with regard to projects financed with resources from FEMCIDI 2004 was that their period of execution would be from mid 2005 to November 2006. Because this is longer than the usual 12-month period, the Board also decided that no extensions would be granted on the period of execution. SEDI worked with the General Secretariat's Department of Legal Services to update the legal instruments (agreements and memoranda of execution) governing the administration and execution of projects, and with the executing institutions on preparation of the plans of execution that each project has to submit in order to receive the first disbursement. By mid February 2006, US$ 3,087,058.81 had been disbursed for all the projects underway.

- Execution: FEMCIDI 2003 and FEMCIDI 2002

In November 2004, the Management Board of the IACD authorized an extension on the execution periods of 73 projects financed by FEMCIDI 2003, and 2 projects financed by FEMCIDI 2002. The termination date of those projects was decided on a case-by-case basis and ranged from late January to late December 2005. Any possibility of an additional extension was precluded, so that the execution of those projects ended in December 2005.

In cooperation with the Offices of the General Secretariat in the member states, SEDI continued the work associated with monitoring execution and analyzing the progress reports. It provided support to executing institutions in those cases where coordination of activities became problematic, particularly in the case of multinational projects. It processed the transfers of funds and examined the final reports.

- Training in project formulation

The Section continued to cooperate with the member states by training personnel in how to use the tools needed to formulate multinational and national cooperation projects for which resources will be requested from international finance organizations and regional and national cooperation agencies. In 2005, workshops were conducted for government officials and officials of nongovernmental organizations in Honduras, Saint Lucia, Panama, Mexico, Venezuela and Uruguay, where over 200 people were trained.

- Evaluation of FEMCIDI-financed projects

The second round of evaluations of FEMCIDI-financed projects concluded in May 2005. The sample selected for this second round involved thirty-eight (38) projects financed by funds from FEMCIDI 2001 and 2002. These projects were slated to be completed between January 2002 and December 2003 (although some projects were granted extensions and continued into 2004). The projects selected for the sample included some one-year projects and other multi-year projects. Of the 38 projects selected to be evaluated by the independent consultants, 18 were multinational and 20 were national. Twenty had received funding of US$100,000 or more.

The evaluations found that 100% of the projects evaluated were highly consistent with the policies and priorities of the governments and with the priorities established by the member states within the framework of the OAS. While a significant percentage of the projects (76%) achieved the planned results, there were differences of degree among them; 24% produced the anticipated results, but to a more limited extent. To a large degree (86%) these projects made proper use of the resources provided and the ratio of costs to results was within reason. As for sustainability, while this factor is still the weakest of all those evaluated (in only 63% of the cases was it found that the stream of benefits and impacts would continue once the project was finalized), this was a slight improvement (5%) over the sustainability of the projects evaluated in the first round.

As a cumulative result of the first and second rounds of evaluation, SEDI identified and grouped the findings into three categories of factors: 1) factors that contribute to the projects' success; 2) factors that impair optimum project development, and 3) lessons learned (elements that must be considered to improve project planning and execution). These factors are intended to make it easier for coordinating and executing institutions, for those presenting new project proposals and for the Secretariat to use the findings to improve project design and execution and prospects for sustainability. Each of the three categories has, therefore, been divided into subcategories based on the design, administration and execution, and sustainability of the projects. Therefore, on instructions from the IACD's Management Board, this information was forwarded to the National Liaison Agencies (ONEs), to the Offices of the General Secretariat in the member states, and to the institutions coordinating/participating in projects, to be used in the formulation of new projects and to be taken into account during project execution.

SEDI started the third round of evaluations in the second half of 2005 by selecting a cross-section of 27 projects financed by FEMCIDI 2002 and 2003. The independent consultants will complete their work when the reports are delivered in the early months of 2006. It is then that the member states will be told of the results of the evaluation. The report of the IACD Management Board, with the analysis of the third round's findings, will be presented in mid 2006.

Department of Education, Culture, Science and Technology

Established by Executive Order 05-13 Rev.1, the DECCT has two sections: Education and Culture (SEC) and Science and Technology (SCT).

Education

The IV Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education was held for the first time in the Caribbean (Scarborough, August 11-12, 2005), Trinidad and Tobago being the host country. The Ministers approved the Declaration of Scarborough and Commitments to Action, which transform the priorities into concrete actions for the next two years. On the previous day, a high-level seminar was staged in partnership with the IDB on "Education for Democratic Citizenship in the Americas: An Agenda for Action." The events leading up to the seminar and meeting included a Preparatory Meeting (May 12-13, 2005); a virtual dialogue with civil society organizations moderated by the *Organización Universitaria Interamericana* (OUI); and a meeting of international organizations involved in education in the Americas.

In its capacity as Technical Secretariat, the SEC organized the IV and V Meetings of the Authorities and Executive Committee of the Inter-American Committee on Education (February 15-16, and November 8-9, 2005) to support and strengthen their work. At the meetings, participants reviewed the status of the projects and activities being conducted under the umbrella of the CIE, and the SEC presented a preliminary 2005-2007 Work Plan based on the Commitments to Action adopted at the Fourth Ministerial.

As to the support and backing for the Hemispheric and Summit Projects, the three hemispheric projects financed by FEMCIDI in the areas of equity and quality, teacher development, and secondary education and certification of labor competencies made headway despite a number of obstacles to operations and communications owing to changes in the ministries and the coordinator countries. Where necessary, support continued to be provided in the form of technical assistance.

As for the Summit Projects, the Regional Education Indicators Project (PRIE) continued to compile and analyze the data gathered by the member States on the performance of their educational systems. It also released its report titled *Educational Panorama 2005. Progressing Toward the Goals.* In July, the SEC

participated in the meeting of the coordinator countries and undertook to design and develop the Web site (www.prie.oas.org).

The Second Meeting of the Hemispheric Education Forum (Brasilia, June 13-15, 2005) was held to improve the evaluation of educational results in the member States. It was attended by 22 countries, including the Municipality of Quito, Ecuador, technical experts from the PRIE, and representatives of international organizations, national and international authorities and observers.

On the theme Educating for Democratic Values and Practices, SEC, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of Colombia, organized an International Workshop on Citizenship Competencies, held in Bogotá (25-28 April 2005). Its objective was to promote an in-depth analysis of Colombia's citizenship competencies program.

At the IV Meeting of Ministers of Education, the countries approved the creation of the *Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices* with three components: (1) research; (2) professional development and educational resources, and (3) information exchange. The *Inter-American Program* will be coordinated by the SEC, in cooperation with the Department for the Promotion of Democracy (OPD).

The SEC provided continuous technical assistance on Early Childhood Education to the ministries of education and international organizations. In September 2005, in partnership with the Network of Human Development of the World Bank, the Children and Youth unit of the World Bank and the Evaluation of Education unit of the IDB, the SEC assisted with the "World Symposium on Early Child Development: A Priority for Sustained Economic Growth & Equity" to ensure that the Latin American and Caribbean countries would be represented. Its support was in the form of the participation of experts in the evaluation of early childhood education programs in the region. Prior to that, national directors of Early Education and Curriculum were invited to participate in an international congress on the subject.

Culture

The main element in the 2003-2005 Work Plan of the Inter-American Committee on Culture (CIC) and of the Plan of Action of Mexico approved by the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Culture and High-level Authorities (Mexico, August 2004) is to launch the Inter-American Cultural Policy Observatory (ICPO). Promoted as the first step toward building this infrastructure was the creation of the Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Network of Cultural Policy Observatories, which was formed by the end of the Network's first meeting (Washington, August 24, 2005). The purpose of the network is to enable kindred entities in the region to share information and experiences. Its definitive structure is under discussion, and a survey is being conducted to establish what the issues and problems are and how cultural observatories in the region operate.

A coordination meeting was held with the Andrés Bello Agreement and the host countries of the Subregional Workshops of Cultural Information Systems (Canada, Chile and Mexico). The idea was to find out what each subregion's specific needs are and establish some common ground on the theme and methodology. The workshops begin in March 2006.

Using horizontal cooperation, a workshop was held on "Projects in Integral Community Preservation and Development" (Mexico, September 19-23, 2005) to share Mexico's experience with enlisting communities in the job of preserving and maintaining their heritage.

The Second Meeting of the CIC (Washington, August 24-25, 2005) sought to define a Work Plan for 2005-2007. It focused on four core themes: i) cultural diversity and sustainable development; ii) cultural

information infrastructure; iii) recommendations of civil society to the Second Ministerial Meeting on Culture; and iv) the Third Ministerial Meeting on Culture. The CIC drafted a paragraph on the importance of cultural diversity, which was included in the Declaration of Mar del Plata.

Also during this period, new officers were elected for the CIC for the 2005-2007 period. The countries elected were as follows: Canada (Chair); Brazil and Guatemala (First Vice Chairs), United States and Jamaica (Second Vice Chairs). The officers were asked to carry out the Work Plan, which as of this writing is circulating among the member states. Canada made an informal offer to host the next Ministerial Meeting on Culture in Montreal, in the fall of 2006.

Science and Technology

In the area of information technologies and advanced networking, through a variety of activities and forums the Section encouraged interconnection efforts designed to facilitate access to the new generation of advanced Internet technologies and application in the region. It bolstered cooperative relations with various institutions, including the National Science Foundation (NSF), the IDB, Internet2, and the National Institute of Health (NIH). It encouraged strengthening of Latin American Cooperation of Advanced Networks (CLARA) and the dialogue between this network and the Pan American Institute of Geography and History and the Regional Center for Space, Science and Technology Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRECTEALC). A cooperation agreement was signed between the OAS and the CRECTEALC. The Section also worked to promote science and technology indicators.

The Section helped CITEL prepare materials on connectivity for scientific and advanced research, which the countries will examine as part of the Agenda for Connectivity in the Americas and the Plan of Action of Quito. It also helped evaluate short courses for the region.

On the issue of Gender and Science and Technology, the Section worked with UNCSTD's Gender Advisory Board, the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and the UNESCO Regional Chair on Women, Science and Technology in Latin America in efforts to mainstream the gender perspective into programs and policies in science and technology. It also participated in the preparation of UNESCO-Paris' International Report on Science, Technology and Gender (IRSTG-2006). Support was provided to enable key entities on this topic to participate in the dialogue with civil society in anticipation of and in preparation for the IV Summit. Various meetings were attended with national and regional institutions to explore ways to cooperate on improving the education of women in science. Prominent here was the IUPAP's Second International Conference on Women in Physics.

The Section brought the gender approach to online courses in science, technology and society organized by the UNESCO Regional Chair and delivered using the platform of the OAS Educational Portal of the Americas.

Working with the United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO), the Engineering for the Americas Symposium was held (Lima, November 2005). Co-sponsored by partners in private enterprise, the event brought together numerous participants from 24 member states and laid the groundwork for the intersectoral movement to upgrade education in engineering and technology in the Americas.

As a result of a January 2006 meeting, there is now a Strategic Plan in place to implement the Symposium's recommendations. The Engineering for the Americas Initiative seeks to establish a mechanism for bringing about reforms in education at the regional level. These reforms will be responsive to the productive sector's needs and will be intended to train new engineers on the basis of transparent accreditation systems, enabling professional mobility, greater investment and regional integration.

The Section followed up on activities associated with the FEMCIDI Multinational Project on "Capacity building for the safe and sustainable use of agricultural biotechnology in Latin America and the Caribbean" and advised on the inclusion of biotechnology in the program of the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT) and in the training of young scientists in the region.

In the area of technological services, the Section continued to provide support to strengthen the Inter-American Metrology System (SIM) as its Executive Secretariat. It also helped strengthen the Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC). Advisory services and technical assistance were provided for the XI General Assembly of the SIM (Trinidad and Tobago, October 2005) and to the meetings of the SIM Council. The Section followed up and provided technical assistance to the Project on Chemical Metrology and Accreditation, which is sponsored in the region by the German government, through the PTB. These efforts are geared to supporting the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), by creating jobs and improving their ability to compete.

In the area of Materials and Nanotechnology, the Section promoted the strengthening of the Inter-American Materials Collaboration (CIAM) and participated in its annual meeting, which was co-sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the National Council of Science and Technology of Mexico. Activities are being coordinated with the member countries of CIAM that are interested in working toward implementation of the hemispheric initiative in this area.

As for promoting civil society's participation, the Section coordinated with the Summits Department in undertaking efforts to promote and facilitate the participation of civil society organizations involved in science, technology, engineering, innovation and science education (CTIIEC) in this sector's dialogue in the lead-up to the IV Summit of the Americas. The Section participated in five important hemispheric events, which were among the efforts to encourage civil society's participation in the dialogue at meetings of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), the OAS General Assembly, and the Summit itself.

The Section supported the Ibero-American Workshops on Nano-Bio-Info-Cogno Converging Technologies, Photovoltaic Energy and Nuclear Magnetic Resonance. These are short training courses for professionals from the region, co-sponsored by the OAS, the CYTED Program and the Spanish International Cooperation Agency.

The second edition of the publication *Science, Technology Engineering and Innovation for Development: A Vision for the Americas in the Twenty-first Century* was released. It captures some of the preparations for the first ministerial of science and technology in the framework of CIDI.

Department of Trade, Tourism and Competitiveness

Established by Executive Order 05-13 Rev. 1, the DCTC is made up of the Trade Section, the Competitiveness and Small Enterprise Section, the Tourism Section and the Foreign Trade Information System (SICE) Section.

Trade

This area supports the member states, particularly the smaller-scale economies, in strengthening their institutional and human capacities so that they are able to participate in the implementation and administration of trade agreements and take advantage of the benefits of broader markets and increased investments.

Activities in the 2005-2006 period were of the kinds described below:

- Supporting the processes of negotiating and implementing trade agreements.

- Supporting the member States with the design, programming and execution of horizontal cooperation projects in the area of trade.

- Analyses and policy studies on trade and other issues related to trade agreements and integration in the Hemisphere.

- Efforts to improve transparency and encourage greater civil society participation in the area of trade.

Recognizing the role that the private sector plays as an engine of the kind of growth that creates jobs, the DTTC encourages links with the private sector by providing its support to the OAS' Private Sector Forum, which meets before the regular sessions of the OAS General Assembly and the Summits of the Americas to advance the dialogue between the public and private sectors and to promote concrete initiatives related to the OAS' agenda for integral development. Two events were staged in support of the Private Sector Forum: the First Private Sector Forum, held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on the occasion of the thirty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly in June 2005. Support was also provided to the Second Private Sector Forum, which was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on November 2, 2005, on the occasion of the IV Summit of the Americas. That forum provided an important opportunity for dialogue between representatives of business organizations –national, regional and inter-American-- and private sector businesses and companies in the Americas. They made their recommendations to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the OAS as to the strategies for creating jobs; promoting competitiveness and productivity through education and technology; and strengthening governance and transparency.

The DTTC is supportive of the member states' efforts to improve transparency and promote greater participation by the diverse sectors of civil society through the variety of projects and activities it organizes for journalists, parliamentarians, scholars and other interested groups.

Competitiveness and Small Enterprise

On the issue of competitiveness, the ground was laid to assist the member states with their efforts to devise, formulate and implement policies that impact competitiveness and prepare them to take advantage of the benefits of trade. The dialogue between the public and private sectors was promoted so that the policies and programs to promote competitiveness will be responsive to the business sector's needs and bring greater prosperity.

On the theme of Small Enterprise, the OAS has been supporting development of the small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean through multinational initiatives in quality, innovation management, enterprise, association, export management and other areas of activity. At the present time, better use of Internet services and digital media are being explored in order to be able to better serve small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in these areas, improve their access to government procurement markets and enable them to compete on international markets.

During the period covered in this report, activity has focused on:

- Building the capacities of small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) and of the institutional framework that supports them, to make better use of online services and electronic media to strengthen their competitiveness for trade and development. During this first year, the activities have focused on identifying Internet accessible services and have been conducted as a collaborative effort involving government, small- and medium-sized enterprise and technical bodies that provide business

and other services to the small- and medium-sized enterprises. The learning got underway with the use of Internet services and electronic media to set up a business, for association and supply chain integration, export management and competitive participation of the small- and medium-sized enterprises in government procurement.

- Development Strategies for Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). A review of lessons learned and best practices, and development of pilot activities in designing development strategies for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); in other words, a review of their capacities to use the available online services such as e-government services, and to participate in e-commerce.

- The government procurements program seeks to make government procurement and contracting in the OAS member states more efficient, effective and transparent.

The activities conducted under this Program in the 2005-2006 period are described below:

- Building up the capacities of the institutions responsible for government procurement in the OAS member states to devise strategies and programs geared to improving the government procurement procedures and systems, particularly by using electronic procurement systems that operate by the Internet.

- Supporting the initiatives of the Inter-American Government Procurement Network run by the national government procurement authorities, and in which private sector and civil society organizations also participate.

- Organizing cooperation to fit the priorities established by the procurement authorities; prominent among those priorities is working on strategies to develop government e-procurement and modernize in general, the participation of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in procurement, terms for standardizing procurement practices, and professional training of administrators and government procurers.

Tourism

In this area, the Department is supporting inter-American technical and policy dialogue for tourism development and joint action in multinational projects and activities, with emphasis on the development of small tourism enterprise, security and good environmental management, all in an effort to make Latin American and Caribbean tourism destinations more competitive on the international markets. The activities have centered on:

- Supporting the holding of the Inter-American Travel Congresses, ministerial meetings held within the framework of the OAS' Inter-American Council for Integral Development.

- Quality management and marketing in micro-, small- and medium-sized tourism enterprises, particularly in small hotels. Salient here are issues related to the establishment of standards, training and certification, and association and supply chain integration for marketing via the Internet, and the use of electronic media. Quality management includes environmental and security management. This has been the focus of the activity in the Caribbean and Central America in recent years.

- Preparation to lessen the impact and recover from natural and man-made disasters that have an impact on the tourism infrastructure within CARICOM. This is a new project in the Caribbean.

- Strategies to promote the development of micro-, small- and medium-sized tourism enterprises. This is a new project related to the mandates on supporting the development of tourism micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, and more specifically on supporting professional development, training, and use of Internet services and digital media. The authorities and technicians from the countries were consulted and recommended that the initial priority be strengthening national capacities for preparing strategies and the issues of quality, association and marketing.

Foreign Trade Information System (SICE)

SICE compiles, and then publishes at its Internet site, data on trade and economic integration. Its purpose is to provide complete and up-to-date information on trade in the Hemisphere, in the four official languages of the OAS. Since SICE's Web page was first introduced (www.sice.oas.org), the number of users has increased steadily. In 2005-2006, it averaged over 6,000 visits per day.

SICE has documents on the following topics: trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties between member countries of the OAS; the FTAA process; commercial arbitration; e-commerce; competition policy; intellectual property; technical obstacles to trade; services; trade-related institutions; general information on the countries; businesses and chambers of commerce; quantitative data, including trade flows, tariffs, and prices.

Some of SICE's activities during the 2005-2006 period focused on: i) promoting transparency through the Web site of the Foreign Trade Information System (SICE), which centralizes and circulates information on trade and related matters in the Americas; and ii) a project on Caribbean Trade Reference Centers for all of CARICOM, developed to facilitate access to information on the issues dealt with in trade negotiations in order to make the Caribbean public more knowledgeable on trade issues.

Department of Sustainable Development

Established by Executive Order No. 05-13 Rev. 1, the DDS is the department of the General Secretariat responsible for advisory and support services on sustainable development and environment, in compliance with the mandates of the organs of government and the Summits of the Americas.

Activities to Support Policy Development

The DDS provided advisory services and technical-operational support to a number of regional events. These included the First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities on Sustainable Development convened by CEPCIDI through its Working Group on Sustainable Development. In anticipation of the meeting, the DDS coordinated the holding of a Workshop on Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Forestry and Tourism, held in San José, Costa Rica, and continued with preparations for the Workshops on Water Resources and the Workshop on Managing Risks from Natural Disasters, to be held in 2006.

It also provided technical and advisory support to the Joint Consultative Body of the Committee on Hemispheric Security (CSH) and the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI) on Natural Disaster Reduction and Risk Management to further fulfillment of resolution AG/RES. 2114 (XXXV-O/05). It participated in the meetings of the Joint Consultative Body, contributing to the exchange of experiences and methods of analyzing vulnerability and risk and the cost and benefit of investing in natural disaster mitigation.

Development of Projects, Programs and Activities

The DDS continued to assist the countries with the design, development and execution of policies, programs and projects, particularly to deal with the challenges that the member states must take on in the area of integral development of water resources, especially in international river basins; sustainable development of border areas; management of coastal areas and adaptation to climate change; conservation of the biological diversity; environmental and economic management; mitigation of natural disasters; sustainable energy and energy efficiency; and public participation. The activities and projects in this area are listed below. A detailed list of them is available at www.oas.org/dds

- Management of water resources

  1. Implementation of integrated water resource management practices for the Pantanal and the Upper Paraguay River Basin.
  2. Integrated management of land-based activities that affect coastal marine areas in the San Francisco River Basin
  3. Implementation of the Strategic Action Program for the Bi-national Bermejo River Basin
  4. Strategic Action Program for Integrated Management of the Water Resources and the Sustainable Development of the San Juan River Basin and Its Coastal Zone.
  5. A framework for management of the water resources in the River Plate Basin with respect to the hydrological effects of climatic variability and change
  6. Environmental protection and sustainable development of the Guarani aquifer system
  7. Building capacities in research and management of the transboundary aquifer for environmental protection and sustainable development of the Guaranï aquifer system
  8. Integrated and sustainable management of the transboundary water resources in the Amazon River Basin
  9. Sustainable land management in the American Gran Chaco transboundary ecosystem
  10. Strategic action plan for the Brazilian Amazon region
  11. Paranaiba Valley integrated development action plan
  12. Improved management of water resources in Brazil
  13. Preparation and execution of the mechanisms for circulating lessons learned and lessons in the integrated management of transboundary water resources
  14. Inter-American Water Resources Network

- Natural Hazards Risk Management

  1. Caribbean Hazard Management Capacity Building Programme (CHAMP)
  2. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) – Community based Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) in Central America
  3. Disaster Reduction on University Campuses in the Americas
  4. Natural Hazard Assessment Techniques
  5. Climate Change: Organizing the Science for the American Cordillera

- Conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity

  1. Inter-American Biodiversity Network (IABIN)
  2. Property Registration System in Latin America and the Caribbean
  3. Sustainable Development and Bio-Cultural Conservation in the Brazil-Surname Border Region

- Management of coastal areas and adaptation to climate change

1. Activity on climate change related to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

- Promotion of sustainable energy

  1. Renewable Energy in the Americas Program
  2. Latin American and Caribbean Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership
  3. Geothermal Energy Project for the Eastern Caribbean (Geo-Caraibes)
  4. Global Sustainable Energy Islands Initiative

- Environmental law, policy and economics

  1. Environmental impact assessments and institutional capacity building in the free market context
  2. Environmental assessments of the Andean Community and Central America
  3. Evaluation of sustainability of the soy production chain

Sources of Financing

A significant percentage (90%) of the financing to carry out the activities and projects listed above comes from external sources, like the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the member states, and regional and international cooperation agencies. The technical cooperation administered by the DDS is approximately US$10 million.

Cross-cutting Themes

In conducting these activities, the DDS supported crosscutting policies and projects in areas such as sustainable agriculture and tourism, and cooperated with the countries in identifying the causes and tools to combat land degradation. Through these measures, the DDS helped cultivate hemispheric policies on issues like governance for environmental issues; the inclusion of local institutions and municipalities in decision-making, and promotion of mechanisms for public and citizen participation that give indigenous groups, women, community and nongovernmental organizations the opportunities to form partnerships in the quest for sustainable development.

Department of Social Development and Employment

The DSDE has two sections: Social Development and Employment.

During the period covered in this report, work got underway on drafting the Social Charter of the Americas. As part of the General Secretariat's team charged with assisting the work of the Joint Permanent Council/CEPCIDI Working Group to draft this Social Charter, the Department provided technical support in preparing documents for the Working Group's discussions.

As for the functions of Technical Secretariat to the Coordinating Committee of the Social Network of Latin America and the Caribbean, which partners social investment funds and other organizations fighting poverty, support was provided for coordination of its Annual Conference, held in Cuzco, Peru, in September 2005. The special voluntary fund was administered as well. The Department took part in cooperation activities, among them the Social Network's meeting with Basque officials in Bilbao in October 2005.

In furtherance of the Work Plan of the Inter-American Committee on Social Development (CIDES), DDSE supported the Chilean government-sponsored international workshop titled: "Learning Communities: the Experience of the Puente-Chile Solidario Program," held in Viña del Mar in July 2005.

Attending the workshop were representatives of 23 member states, who were able to share their experiences in social protection. The Department also worked on a project on micro, small- and medium-sized enterprise, to both encourage and reflect upon their development as one strategy for fighting poverty and creating jobs.

As for the employment issue, the XIV Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor of the OAS was held in Mexico City in September 2005. It was attended by Ministers of Labor from throughout the Hemisphere, labor organizations and management organizations, and representatives of a number of international agencies. During this event, the Ministers approved the Declaration and Plan of Action of Mexico, which will steer hemispheric cooperation on employment and labor. They also sent a message to the IV Summit of the Americas, which was included in the Declaration of Mar del Plata. The message underscored the vital contributions that the ministries of labor made to achieve the Summit's objectives, the promotion of decent work and policies that encourage investment and growth with equity.

In preparing for the XIV Conference of Ministers of Labor, the Secretariat coordinated a broad negotiating process that involved three preparatory meetings and a Virtual Forum. It also continued to strengthen the working groups of the Conference of Ministers of Labor, which met in Buenos Aires in April of 2005. It promoted and consolidated the participation of labor and business, which were part of the advisory bodies, COSATE and CEATAL, at the Conference and at the IV Summit of the Americas. The strategy for horizontal cooperation among the ministries of labor was further developed and the area's ties with other international agencies were tightened. In fact, in September 2005 the OAS General Secretariat signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).