

## **EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT**

The mission of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI), comprising the Office of the Executive Secretary and the Departments of “Follow-up, Policies and Programs,” “Education and Culture,” “Social Development and Employment,” “Science, and Technology,” “Trade, Tourism, and Competitiveness,” and “Sustainable Development,” is to assist the member states with their efforts to reduce poverty and achieve greater economic and social development. It does this by supporting dialogue at the highest levels where policies in the areas of social development, employment, education, culture, science and technology, trade, tourism, competitiveness and sustainable development and environment are crafted and the priorities set. It also promotes, coordinates, and facilitates execution of programs, projects, and activities in these areas, focusing on institutional strengthening, capacity building, and implementation of effective public policy.

### **Office of the Executive Secretary (OSE)**

Through the Office of its Executive Secretary, in 2006 SEDI provided assistance to the CIDI policy-making bodies, while also orchestrating its activities with various offices of the Secretariat, a number of which organized ministerial meetings during the course of the year. It also continued to design and execute development initiatives that serve to strengthen institutions, build capacities, establish successful development policies and mobilize external resources to support this cause. In the process, it has endeavored to base its activities on promoting horizontal cooperation among the member states, collaboration with the private sector and the development of human resources.

In 2006, the cooperative relationship with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was consolidated. Through its New Programming Approaches (NPA) program, CIDA is supporting four initiatives implemented by the OSE. The relationship with the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas (ICA) was also further cemented with the agreement signed for a new cooperation project that guarantees a two-year plan of activities for the RED GEALC (Network of e-Government Leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean). The Inter-American Development Bank also joined the group of promoters of the RED GEALC through its Regional Public Goods initiative.

Under the aegis of RED GEALC, three hemispheric workshops were held in the area of e-government: Canada (March), the Dominican Republic (August), and Colombia (October). These workshops provided an opportunity for the e-government authorities of the member countries of the RED GEALC to assemble in order to examine, respectively, the following: “Sharing Canadian e-Government Experiences,” “Modernizing Customs Administration through Information and Communications Technologies,” and “Governmental Interoperability and Intranet.” Similarly, through the FOCOH (Horizontal Cooperation Fund) of the RED GEALC, ten e-government experts from Latin America and the Caribbean were mobilized to exchange experiences. During the course of the year, SEDI became chair of the *eGe* (E-government Effectiveness Inter-Agency Task Force), a vehicle enabling its member institutions to coordinate

and collaborate: the World Bank, the IDB, the OAS, UNDESA, ECLAC, the ICA, and the Development Gateway Foundation.

Kingston (Jamaica) was the venue for an OSE-organized workshop on modernizing customs through information and communication technologies (ICTs), as a result of which two projects were prepared to share Jamaica's customs solution, CASE (Customs Automated Services), with Grenada and Antigua and Barbuda. The formalities necessary for the two projects to get underway are in process. In 2006, the OSE issued the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of its online e-government course. Thus far, some 2,000 officials from 32 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have graduated from the course. The latter has been given in Spanish, English, and Portuguese and its graduates have been incorporated into a virtual mechanism of collaboration and exchange, called the OAS e-Government Forum.

In 2006, the MuNet program (Municipal Efficiency and Transparency) embarked upon its most activity-intensive period. In the area of e-government, a total of 186 public officials received training, 21 e-government strategies were introduced to the 21 participating municipal governments in 11 Latin American countries, and implementation of the technological support tools was launched: MuniPortal, MuniCompra and MuniServi. In the area of cadastre, the cooperative relationship with the four participating municipalities was formalized. Training got underway in those municipalities and the initial financial disbursements were released to support those municipal cadastre initiatives.

As for cooperation with the private sector, the OSE continued to implement the agreement with Steward Title International, following culmination of the cadastre and property registry project conducted in Antigua and Barbuda. In the final quarter of 2006, the OSE and Steward Title International teamed up for a joint mission to St. Kitts and Nevis to assess the possibility of replicating the successful experience in Antigua and Barbuda. Similarly, under the agreement with Microsoft, a municipal e-government portal was donated to the La Paz (Bolivia) Municipality. Arrangements for this initiative are being finalized. The OSE signed an agreement with the firm **ESRI** for over one million dollars in cooperation in the area of geographic information systems (GIS).

The Computers for Communities program being conducted with the support of CIDA, the ICA, and Industry Canada, issued a call for project proposals in 2006. Six countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Paraguay, and Venezuela) were selected and will receive start-up capital to set up a computer refurbishment program.

In the area of Corporate Social Responsibility, the OAS, with the support of CIDA and the MIF-IDB, continued to support the training and awareness activities that FORO EMPRESA conducts in the region. A program was designed and set in motion to promote corporate social responsibility among small- and medium-sized enterprises in the Caribbean.

During this reporting period, the "Best Practices Forum of the Americas" focused on the important role that ICTs play in running elections. This online forum, staged in cooperation with the OAS' Secretariat for Political Affairs, was able to put into circulation 300 copies of the English-Spanish bilingual publication on introducing new technologies into electoral processes,

which examines the Paraguayan, Panamanian, and Colombian experiences. An agreement was also concluded with CIDA to hold a forum in 2007 on the role that ICTs play in mitigating natural disasters, in cooperation with SEDI's Department of Sustainable Development.

During the first half of 2006, the OSE provided technical support and advisory services to the Working Group charged with negotiating and drafting the "Declaration of Santo Domingo" and the resolution of support for the Declaration's implementation [AG/RES. 2243 (XXXVI-O/06), both approved by the OAS General Assembly at its thirty-sixth regular session. The Declaration and the resolution contain a number of mandates that SEDI's Executive Office has been implementing.

### **Department of Follow-up, Policies and Programs**

This Department coordinates and provides support to the process whereby decisions in the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) are either arrived at or implemented, as the case may be. The Department's principal activities are geared toward enabling decision-making on the part of the political bodies and following up on their mandates. The Department is also responsible for promoting, supporting, coordinating, and facilitating the design and execution of programs, projects and activities in partnership for development, particularly through the Special Multilateral Fund of CIDI (FEMCIDI). To perform these functions, the Department has grouped its activities into two sections: a) Ministerial Meetings Follow-up, which serves as Secretariat of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), and b) Program and Project Evaluation, responsible for administering and evaluating the Special Multilateral Fund of CIDI (FEMCIDI) and other projects and activities in partnership for development.

The Ministerial Meetings Follow-up Section provides technical, substantive, and logistical support, coordinating preparation, staging, and follow-up of ministerial and technical meetings held within the CIDI framework and meetings of the Permanent Executive Committee of CIDI (CEPCIDI), its subsidiary bodies, and the Management Board of the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD). It also assists the Agency's Executive Secretary/Director with the Agency's relations with the permanent missions, international organizations, and offices of the General Secretariat. It is also responsible for preparing (or, where appropriate, coordinating preparation of) the draft resolutions, declarations, statutes, rules of procedure, and reports that it submits to the corresponding political bodies, and for advising their authorities and the representatives of the member states in general.

Among the partnership for development activities that the Program and Project Evaluation Section administers are partnership funds created with contributions received from countries to implement specific projects. The bulk of the Section's business centers on administering FEMCIDI. Every year, FEMCIDI has around 100 projects in progress. The projects are in all the member states, in the areas of education, science and technology, culture, social development, democracy, tourism, sustainable development and environment, and trade. The countries themselves present the project proposals, which can be either national or multinational (regional or hemispheric) and can last for up to four years. The Fund is made up of voluntary contributions from the member states, which as a rule total 8 million dollars annually. In order for a country to qualify to receive cooperation from this fund, it must be a contributor.

- Secretariat of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development and Its Subsidiary Bodies

During this reporting period, the Department coordinated the activities conducted in furtherance of the mandates emanating from the General Assembly, the Eleventh Regular Meeting of CIDI, and those adopted at the various sectoral ministerials and meetings of the inter-American committees.

In a collaborative effort with other offices of the General Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development planned, coordinated and assisted with the preparatory work for and holding of the following sectoral meetings: the Third Meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Education; the Third 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 First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Sustainable Development. A more detailed account of the decisions that the member states adopted at each meeting appears at the pages corresponding to each area of SEDI.

As Secretariat of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), the Department planned and coordinated the Eleventh Regular Meeting of CIDI. In preparation for this meeting, the Department organized the meetings of the various bodies; reports and technical documents were prepared on issues within its competence. It also made its contribution to the exchange of specialized information relating to cooperation policies in those priority areas of the Strategic Plan that were included on the CIDI agenda.

It is also worth noting that in resolution AG/RES. 2257 (XXXVI-O/06) the General Assembly resolved to establish an immediate and temporary pause in the awarding of new 2006 graduate (PRA) and undergraduate (SPECRAF) scholarships and that the pause was to remain in effect until the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) and the Permanent Council approved, in a joint meeting, the new scholarship mechanism. It also instructed the General Secretariat through the Secretariat of the Human Development Fund Committee to submit to the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI) for its consideration a proposal for management of the scholarship program in strict observance of rules on competitiveness, transparency, and ethics. The General Assembly recommended to CEPCIDI that it consider and approve the changes that need to be made to the Manual of Procedures of Scholarships and Training Programs of the OAS, including the establishment of a cap on individual yearly tuition scholarships. The Department of Follow-up, Policies, and Programs has assisted the Subcommittee on Partnership for Development Policies in the process of negotiating that new Manual.

Finally, the Department was responsible for assisting the work of the Management Board of the IACD, processing e-mail inquiries and organizing meetings on management of technical cooperation projects financed with funds from the Special Multilateral Fund of CIDI (FEMCIDI).

- Program and Project Evaluation
  - Programming of the Special Multilateral Fund of CIDI (FEMCIDI) 2006

Based on the findings and recommendations from the first three rounds held to evaluate FEMCIDI-funded projects, SEDI designed, as a pilot experiment, new formats for presenting new project proposals and the work plan for continuing projects. At the end of the 2006 FEMCIDI programming cycle, the Secretariat will analyze the successes and/or problems observed and will make the necessary adjustments.

SEDI prepared the document titled “FEMCIDI 2006 Preliminary Partnership for Development Activities Programming Proposal,” which featured 110 project proposals presented by 33 member states. Of those 110 proposals, 58 were proposals for project continuation and 52 were new project proposals; 49 were multilateral and 61 were national. The amount that the proposals represented was US\$12,205,172. The total funds available for FEMCIDI 2006 programming came to US \$8,195,402.43 (this amount included the net contributions to FEMCIDI 2005 and to FEMCIDI 2006, as well as accrued interest, non-programmed funds, funds not executed and funds returned).

The Programming Proposal document and the documentation pertaining to the projects included (the complete proposals, progress reports, work plans, etc.) were sent to the members of the nonpermanent specialized committees (CENPES). The meeting of the CENPES for the 2006 FEMCIDI programming cycle was from February 7 through 9, 2007. The members of the eight committees evaluated the projects and presented the IACD Management Board with their recommendations on which projects should be funded and the funding level suggested for each.

The following is the number of projects included in the Programming Proposal by account, and the distribution of the requested resources:

Trade:	10 projects for US\$1.187.206
Social Development:	17 projects for US\$1.475.104
Education:	26 projects for US\$ 3.142.064
Culture:	4 projects for US\$353.319
Science and Technology:	15 projects for US\$1.522.374
Democracy:	7 projects for US\$667.046
Tourism:	10 projects for US\$1.333.359
Sustainable Development and Environment:	21 projects for US\$ 2.524.700

As part of the FEMCIDI 2006 Programming process, SEDI had to do a detailed analysis of the project profiles presented by the member states. SEDI chose a certain number of profiles that met the selection criteria in effect and that reflected a proper thematic and regional balance.

In the next phase, SEDI provided meticulous technical and administrative support to the institutions that would be conducting the profiled projects, so as to ensure proper, on-time

execution of the final project. Final proposals that were either incomplete or unsatisfactory were withdrawn from the Preliminary Programming Proposal.

- Execution of FEMCIDI 2004

In 2006, SEDI, with the cooperation of the General Secretariat's Offices in the Member States, monitored project execution and did analyses of the project progress reports. It also provided assistance to executing agencies when coordination difficulties arose, particularly in the case of the multinational projects.

The FEMCIDI 2004 Partnership for Development Activities Programming included ninety-two projects—52 multinational and 40 national—totaling US \$7,598,967.52. A decision of the Management Board lengthened the period of execution for projects funded under FEMCIDI 2004 to make it 17 months, rather than the usual 12.

- Evaluation of FEMCIDI funded projects

The third round of evaluations of FEMCIDI-funded projects ended in October 2006. The sample selected for this third round included 27 projects funded under FEMCIDI 2001, 2002, and 2003. The project sample included some one-year projects, and other multi-annual projects. Of those 27 projects selected for evaluation by independent consultants, 18 were multinationals and nine were nationals. Twenty-four of them received funding of US\$ 100,000 or more.

The evaluations revealed that 96% of the projects evaluated were very much in keeping with the policies and priorities of the governments, and with the policies that the member states set within the OAS framework. A significant percentage of the projects (74%) achieved the anticipated results, although by varying degrees; 26% of the evaluated projects achieved the expected results, but to a much more limited extent. In large part (74%) the projects used the resources provided properly and the costs/results ratio was reasonable. Sustainability continues to be the weakest factor of all those evaluated, and the sustainability results in this third round of evaluations were no better than they were in the second round (in only 63% of cases was it found that the benefits and impact would outlive the project).

The cumulative result of the first, second, and third evaluation rounds was that SEDI identified outcomes and three categories of factors: 1) factors contributing to a project's success; 2) factors hindering optimal project performance; and 3) lessons learned (considerations that should be taken into account to improve project planning and execution). These factors make it easier for coordinating institutions, executing institutions, those presenting new project proposals and the Secretariat to use the evaluation findings to improve project design and execution and future prospects of project sustainability. In early 2007 the information was sent to the IACD's Management Board, 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.

## Department of Education and Culture

The mission of the Department of Education and Culture (DEC) is to support the member states' efforts to ensure a quality education for everyone and to protect and use their rich cultural heritage as a vital contribution toward achieving their economic, social, and human development. The Department discharges this mission by promoting dialogue on policy, knowledge sharing, and technical cooperation. In 2006, it furthered the dialogue on policy by organizing the Third Meeting of Ministers of Culture and Highest Appropriate Authorities and the Third Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Education. It also helped to promote technical cooperation in order to share knowledge and establish new networks of policy makers, researchers, and specialists in education and culture. Through its alliances with the member states and other organizations, the DEC mobilized US\$737,400 in 2006 and is on its way to mobilizing some US\$1.3 million in 2007 from external sources, in support of OAS initiatives in education and culture.

- Education

One of the Department's most important functions is to serve as Technical Secretariat of the meetings of ministers and of the Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE). The inter-American committees, composed of one representative for each member state, transforms the commitments made at the ministerial meetings into concrete measures. The DEC assisted the Third Meeting of the CIE (October 2006) with its evaluation of the progress made on the programs and projects in the 2005-2007 Work Plan approved by the ministers of education. It also supported the two meetings of the authorities of the CIE and the Executive Committee (November 2005, April 2006) to consider the progress made on existing initiatives and to evaluate 12 project proposals, three of which were approved to be partially financed with funds approved through CP/RES. 831 (1842/02).

In 2005, the Ministers of Education recommended execution of the Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices. As Technical Secretariat, the DEC convened the Advisory Group (Bogotá, April 19-21) to review the program's work plan; it began a survey of the member states' policies and programs in this area. It helped organized the "Inter-American Seminar on Good Practices in Education for Citizenship" (Mexico City, July 6-8) and launched an online bulletin and web portal ([www.educadem.oas.org](http://www.educadem.oas.org)).

The DEC and the Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago launched the Inter-American Teacher Educator Network at a seminar on policies and practices held from September 26 to 29. One hundred delegates, including university rectors, teacher educators, policy makers, researchers, and officials of international organizations in the Hemisphere examined common challenges and how best to tackle them.

In 2006, the DEC and experts from the member states designed the hemispheric project on "Policies and strategies for a successful transition of small children toward socialization and school," whose purpose is to complement the member states' efforts to design, improve, and evaluate policies so as to thereby improve coverage, quality, and equity in early childhood development (ECD) from birth to eight years.

The DEC continued to serve on the advisory group of the Regional Project on Educational Indicators (PRIE), whose purpose is capacity building in the statistics offices or units in the ministries of education; promoting more and better use of data when mapping policy; and compiling and publishing data on the progress that the 34 member states have made toward achieving the educational goals set by the Summits of the Americas. It also designed the Web site [www.prie.oas.org](http://www.prie.oas.org) to circulate the project's results.

- Culture

As Technical Secretariat of the CIC, the DEC helped stage the Special Meeting of the CIC (Washington, March 27-28), the Preparatory Meeting for the Third Meeting of Ministers of Culture (Washington, August 17-18), and the Third Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Culture and Highest Appropriate Authorities (Montreal, Quebec). The purpose of the March meeting was to decide the format for the Ministerial and approve the CIC Work Plan 2006-2007, devised by the authorities of the CIC and the DEC. To help the states decide on and then evaluate the activities and improve their quality, a DEC-designed form for project presentation began to be used.

The Special Meeting of the CIC decided that the theme of the ministerial dialogue at the Third Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Culture would be drawn from the principles spelled out in the Declaration of Mar del Plata, with a view to facilitating an exchange of experiences among the states. The lead presentations for each of the four ministerial themes were presented by the United States, Brazil, Jamaica, and Guatemala, although other member states introduced papers on those themes as well, as did civil society organizations. At the close of the meeting, the ministers approved the Final Report and a List of Priority Activities.

Three subregional workshops held in 2006 figure prominently among the horizontal cooperation activities in the Work Plan, intended to enable knowledge-sharing and institution-building (the Caribbean – Trinidad and Tobago, March; Central America – Mexico, July; and South America – Chile, September). Their purpose was to show the progress that the member states have made with their cultural information systems and the challenges they face; to share the Canadian, Mexican, and Chilean experiences with cultural information systems; and to learn about the work that subregional and international organizations are doing in this area. In April 2007, a meeting will be held in Colombia for synthesis, orchestration, and planning, with international experts, member states from each subregion, and international and subregional organizations participating. The idea was to come up with proposed lines of action and concrete activities that will then be submitted to the Third Meeting of the CIC, slated for the second half of 2007.

The Third Ministerial updated the Permanent Portfolio of Exemplary Programs in Culture, featuring the programs that the ministries and authorities of culture want to share with their counterparts. In December, Honduras was the site of a workshop to share the experience gained from the Rescue Program for Indigenous and Traditional Handicraft Production (PROPAITH). Ten member states were represented, and as many national representatives participated. The DEC is endeavoring to upgrade the means used to share these experiences and strengthen subsequent follow-up in order to be able to gauge the impact of these activities.

## **Department of Science and Technology (DCT)**

The Department of Science and Technology (DCT) was reorganized during the second half of 2006, with a view to conducting concrete measures more efficiently and effectively, in keeping with the Organization's mandates.

Given the situation, the priority of the Engineering for the Americas (*EftA*) initiative was recognized. In 2006, the deans of the schools of engineering, high-ranking government officials, representatives of industry, and the DCT established a plan of action to set the objectives and the means to achieve quality assurance in engineering education. With the participation of four countries—the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago—a pilot project was presented to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to seek financing.

- Metrology

Through its Metrology program, the DST is supporting National Metrology Institutes (NMIs) in the 34 member states of the OAS and has prepared an expansion plan for 2007.

- Energy

The Department of Sustainable Development and the Department of Science and Technology are working together on alternative renewable energy sources, which will be the challenge of the decades to come. At the thirty-seventh regular session of the General Assembly, to be held in Panama, concrete actions will be proposed to promote energy policies and environmental improvements and to mitigate the effects of climate change.

- Gender issues

Internationally, the Department of Science and Technology continues to promote the integration of a gender equality and equity perspective in the creation of knowledge. The objective is to build up science and technology policies and programs in the region, which the First Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Science and Technology listed as one of the priorities. Taking this into consideration and in coordination with the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), the UNCST Gender Advisory Board, and the UNESCO Sub-Regional Chair: Women, Science and Technology in Latin America, the DCT prepared a program proposal for donors that support implementation of the hemispheric initiative on this topic.

- Popularization of science

In 2006, the DCT prepared a preliminary document that recognizes scientific journalists as essential to building national capacity in the sciences, technology, and innovation that promote social and economic development.

- Civil society participation

The DCT prepared and organized the Virtual Forum with Civil Society “Good Governance and Development in the Knowledge-Based Society” as part of the OAS’ effort to promote and facilitate the participation and contribution of civil society organizations within the framework of the next session of the General Assembly. The recommendations that this forum made were presented to the ministers of foreign affairs, the heads of delegation of the member states and the Secretary General during the dialogue with civil society on the occasion of the thirty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly, held in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic.

### **Department of Social Development and Employment**

The main mission of the Department of Social Development and Employment (DDSE) is to assist member states with their efforts to further development with equity, by promoting policies and programs to reduce poverty, create decent jobs, and generate employment. It achieves these objectives through integrated activities in the following areas: i) promotion of inter-American dialogue on social development, labor and employment; ii) promotion of partnership for development, and iii) coordination of activities with other international organizations, academics, the private sector, and civil society.

- Social Development

The DDSE continued to assist with negotiations on the Social Charter of the Americas and its plan of action. To that end, it provided technical secretariat services to the Permanent Council/CEPCIDI Joint Working Group responsible for this topic. As technical secretariat of the Social Network for Latin America and the Caribbean, the DDSE was also instrumental in coordinating the Network’s XIII Annual Conference, held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Department also continued to administer the Network’s voluntary fund. In furtherance of the agreements reached, the DDSE worked closely with the Office of the President of the Social Network, currently held by Chile’s FOSIS, in order to program the cooperation activities that will be carried out in 2007.

As part of a World Bank initiative, the DDSE, the IDB, and ECLAC teamed up to begin drafting an inter-agency document on the impact of a rights-driven approach when designing and implementing social policy. Four countries in the region were selected for case studies: Chile, Guatemala, Peru, and Uruguay.

- Employment

The DDSE concluded the project on “Development of micro and small enterprise as a strategy for creating jobs and fighting poverty in the Americas,” conducted under the auspices of the Spanish International Cooperation Agency. The project focused on analyzing and identifying strategies for social development and job creation achieved by promoting micro and small enterprise. In that framework, and in order to examine the implications of the specific mandates on this subject that emanated from the Fourth Summit of the Americas, a working meeting was held with the Steering Committee of the SME Congress of the Americas. A document was

prepared titled “*Microempresas, pobreza y empleo en América Latina y el Caribe. Una propuesta de trabajo*” [Micro-enterprise, poverty and employment in Latin America and the Caribbean. A Work Proposal] and then presented at a technical meeting that brought together the ministries of labor and economics and members of the Social Network. Two programs were added to the DDSE during the year that will have a strong impact on employment creation: the Government Procurement Program and the E-MSME Development Program.

With the support of the United States Mission to the OAS and the Canadian International Development Agency, the Government Procurement Program coordinated five seminars-workshops and one Inter-American Conference in which high-ranking offices in charge of national government procurement offices in the OAS member states participated: 1) “Competitive Participation of MSME in Government Procurement,” Mexico, May 2006, 34 participants from 14 countries; 2) “Standardization of Government Procurement Practices,” Costa Rica, July 2006, 15 participants from 11 countries; 3) “Professional Development and Training in Government Procurement,” Ecuador, September 2006, 11 participants from 6 countries; 4) “Strategies for Development of Government e-Procurement,” Brazil, September 2006, 15 participants from 12 countries; and 5) “Integrating Government Procurement into Financial Systems,” Paraguay, 23 participants from 14 countries. The Third Government Procurement Conference of the Americas was held in Peru in November 2006 with 35 participants from 18 countries in attendance.

At the Network’s website, the Program publicized the progress made in modernizing government procurement systems in the Hemisphere and was instrumental in developing initiatives to institutionalize technical cooperation on the subject of government procurement.

During this reporting period, the Second Phase of the E-MSME Project in Central America and Panama was completed with the support of FEMCIDI and the CIDA. Pilot learn-by-doing activities were conducted with 120 businesses in Central America and Panama, and six national meetings were staged to announce the results of these pilot activities. Participating were 600 representatives of MSMEs, business associations, technical support organizations, and entities responsible for promoting MSMEs in the region. At the end of this phase, a meeting was held in Costa Rica in November 2006 to share results and findings.

With support from the Permanent Mission of the United States to the OAS, the following activities were also carried out under the same project: 1) participation of the national directors responsible for promoting MSME in Central America and Panama in the SME Congress of the Americas, held in Mexico, in May 2006; 2) Inter-American Seminar on Competitive Participation of the MSME in Government Procurement, held in Mexico in May; 3) the Inter-American Seminar on E-MSME Development Strategies, Panama, October 2006. The Inter-American Network for Development of E-MSMEs was formed at this last event.

- Labor

As Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (CIMT), the DDSE worked with Conference authorities on implementing the Plan of Action approved by the XIV CIMT. To that end, the DDSE orchestrated a meeting of the Conference’s Working Groups, held in Mexico City in April 2006. This was an opportunity for further discussion of the CIMT’s

priority issues and to make headway on preparations for the XIV CIMT, slated for Trinidad and Tobago in 2007. Against the backdrop of the renewed commitment between the OAS and the ILO to strengthen the CIMT, as agreed in a memorandum signed by the highest authorities of the two organizations in August 2005, the DDSE participated in the XVI American Regional Meeting of the ILO, held in Brasilia, and in the ILO Tripartite Caribbean Employment Forum, held in Barbados in October 2006.

With financial assistance from the Government of Canada, in 2006 the DDSE launched the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL), a mechanism for cooperating and sharing relevant knowledge and experience in order to build up the human and institutional capacities of the Ministries of Labor in the Hemisphere. As part of the RIAL initiative, three hemispheric workshops were held on topics that the CIMT had singled out as priorities: 1) the Second Workshop on Occupational Health and Safety, San Salvador, El Salvador, May 16 and 17, inaugurated by President Elías Antonio Saca, with representatives of the Ministries of Labor in 23 member states in attendance. This workshop was organized by the DDSE, in partnership with the ILO, PAHO, and Fundaceresso; 2) the Workshop on Labor Mediation and Labor Market Observatories, Cocoyoc, Mexico, November 7, with specialists from the CIMT and representatives of COSATE and CEATAL present; 3) the Workshop on Migrant Workers: Protection of Labor Rights and Labor Markets Programs, Ottawa, Canada, November 28 and 29. Participants included representatives of 28 member states of COSATE and CEATAL, and representatives of the ILO, the IACHR, the OECS, and others.

### **Department of Sustainable Development**

The Department of Sustainable Development is the SEDI department responsible for promoting sustainable development and rational environmental management.

In 2006 it played a role in the preparations for the First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Sustainable Development by organizing workshops for technical preparation. In conjunction with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Department held a workshop on sustainable agriculture, forestry, and tourism in Costa Rica, immediately prior to the OECD-OAS Global Trade Forum, on trade and sustainable development. In Jamaica, the Department organized a technical workshop on Natural Hazards Risk Management. A number of experts from the Hemisphere gathered in Ecuador to promote integrated water resources management. The Department also encouraged the public's participation prior to the meeting, by holding consultations with civil society in Panama, Argentina, Bolivia, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States, via a virtual forum operated in collaboration with the Development Gateway Foundation. Again in preparation for the meeting and in keeping with the mandates contained in General Assembly resolution AG/RES. 2244 (XXXVI-O/06), the Department of Sustainable Development partnered with the Department of Trade, Tourism, and Competitiveness for consultations with the private sector that produced invaluable information on the relevant issues on the ministerial agenda. The ministerial meeting held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, December 4 and 5, approved a ministerial declaration on sustainable development ("Declaration of Santa Cruz +10") and the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (PIDS).

The Department's website was redesigned in 2006, and the series on policies and other forms of communication continued.

The sum total of the Department's program of external projects is approximately US\$70 million of full support for projects, including matching funds, with an annual program of external projects of some US\$8 million. The major activities of the program are the following:

- Integrated Water Resource Management

The Department continued to support the promotion of integrated and sustainable water resource management by the member states, mainly focusing on transboundary watersheds and coastal areas. The principal projects are: the Strategic Action Programme for the Binational Basin of the Bermejo River; a Framework for the Sustainable Management of the Transboundary Water Resources of the La Plata Basin; the Project for the Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of the Guarani Aquifer System; Integrated and Sustainable Management of Transboundary Water Resources in the Amazon River Basin, and Sustainable Management of Lands in the Transboundary Ecosystem of the American Gran Chaco.

The Department played an active role in the preparations for and holding of the Fourth World Water Forum in Mexico City in March 2006. In the lead-up to the Forum, the Department chaired the Operative Committee for the Americas for two terms, assisting in dialogue among various organizations that work for sustainable management of water resources. It also contributed to the regional evaluation of water resources in the Hemisphere and sponsored and participated in various sessions held during the Forum.

During this reporting period, the Department continued to collaborate with UNESCO-IHP on preparing the first volume of UNESCO/OAS ISARM Americas Programme "Transboundary Aquifers of the Americas – Preliminary Evaluation." The book is the first attempt to synthesize what is currently known about transboundary aquifers in this Hemisphere. It is mainly geared to those who have decision-making responsibilities and to regional and international organizations that work for the region's sustainable development.

- Renewable energy

One of the Department's objectives is to encourage greater use of renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies and systems. Through its program Renewable Energy in the Americas (REIA), it assists the member states in crafting policy and regulatory reforms, creating a human and institutional capacity, technical assistance and resource assessment, knowledge management, and financial support. The program operates through world and regional associations and acts as technical secretariat for Latin America and the Caribbean in the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP) and the Global Village Energy Partnership (GVEP).

The REIA program has set in motion a bio-energy feasibility study in St. Kitts and Nevis which looks at the possibility of transforming sugar cane and trash into energy (electric power and/or ethanol). It is also conducting a study to power rural schools in El Salvador with solar energy, and has contacted high-ranking officials in the energy sector in Mexico, Guatemala and

Dominica to implement studies on sustainable energy policies and regulatory reforms. It is also working on a regional feasibility study on geothermal energy in the Eastern Caribbean. The Department has worked with Dominica, Saint Lucia, and St. Kitts and Nevis, with resources from the Global Environment Facility, trying to promote commercial development of this resource.

- Natural Hazards Risk Management

The Department's mission in this area is to develop projects to reduce vulnerability to natural hazards. During the first half of 2006, it provided technical support to the Joint Consultative Organ on Natural Disaster Reduction and Risk Management (JCO) of the Committee on Hemispheric Security and to the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development. The Joint Consultative Organ was created to work on implementation of the recommendations made by the OAS General Assembly on natural disasters and to propose amendments to the Statutes of the Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (FONDEM) and to the Statutes of the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction (CIRDN).

Similarly, with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Department launched the Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation and held the first meeting of national focal points in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia on December 3, on the occasion of the First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities on Sustainable Development.

- Environmental law, policy, and economics

In the area of environmental law, environmental policy, and economics, the Department has worked at both the regional and hemispheric levels to strengthen economic, social, and environmental policies, to ensure that they are all mutually reinforcing and contribute to sustainable development. It also focused on building up capacity in the area of environmental management under the umbrella of economic integration and liberalization of trade in the region.

In 2006, the Department maintained two databases on environmental legislation in the region and published the findings of an analysis of the discrepancies in the institutional priorities of the trade and environmental sectors in El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The Department is planning to prepare a cooperation program that focuses mainly on the new challenges that the region is facing as a result of the new economic and trade reforms. It also completed its work in the Andean region, where it provided support to Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru to prepare national environmental assessments of free trade; similar assessments were done for the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and Panama. In partnership with participants from three MERCOSUR countries, the Department also worked on a study of the impact of soy production on that region's sustainability.

- Biodiversity

The biodiversity program's goal is to help relieve poverty by making more information available for decision-making. Two projects—the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) and the Amazon-Andes Protected Area Metadata Database (AAPAD)—focus on creating

and standardizing national and subnational databases on species/specimens, invasive species, ecosystems, protected areas, and pollinators, promote interoperability, and create value added computerized products. IABIN awarded 10 grants for data content creation intended for multilingual training sessions on tools to create databases, to improve the countries' capacity in producing data that can be accessed within the IABIN network. The Amazon-Andes Protected Metadata Database created an information system to maintain an Internet database containing information on the situation of the protected areas in the eight countries that make up the Andean-Amazon Basin region.

- Rational management of chemical products and other initiatives

In mid 2006, the Department created two new areas of activity. The first involves efforts at the country-specific and regional levels to improve rational management of chemical products. This includes a better command of the main chemical products within the countries in order to determine whether the chemicals they contain are toxic and pose serious threats to human health and the environment. This initiative will also create opportunities to improve subregional cooperation in this field. The second area has to do with the quest for innovative ways to finance sustainable development, to support member states' activities. The work in this area got underway in late 2006, as the Department compiled data and case studies of innovating financing, especially payment for ecological services.

### **Department of Trade, Tourism, and Competitiveness**

The Department of Trade, Tourism, and Competitiveness (DTTC) is composed of the Trade Section, Competitiveness Section, the Tourism Section, and the Foreign Trade Information System (SICE).

- Trade

The Trade area helps the member states—particularly the smaller economies—build up their human and institutional capacities to enable them to participate in the implementation and administration of bilateral and subregional trade agreements and take advantage of the benefits that accrue from expanded markets and increased investment.

To that end, in 2006 the Trade Section helped sharpen the member states' institutional capacities through a series of seminars, workshops, and courses that target government officials and representatives of the private sector and that deal with the principal issues on the trade agenda, including those associated with tapping into the benefits that trade and integration in such areas as services and investment can yield.

It also supported regional, subregional, and bilateral economic and trade integration processes. Accordingly, it continued to work in cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the World Bank, and the secretariats of regional organizations like CARICOM, SIECA, the Andean Community and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). It also helped the member states design, program, and execute horizontal cooperation projects in the trade area. It

organized workshops and seminars to share successful experiences in administering trade agreements, including such issues as settlement of disputes, sanitary, and phytosanitary measures and intellectual property issues.

It also prepared analyses and studies on trade policy and other matters related to trade and integration agreements in the Hemisphere, for a better understanding of these topics and to be used in crafting development-conducive public policy. It also provided support to the member states' efforts at increased transparency and at encouraging sectors of civil society to participate in the dialogue on trade and economic integration.

In the competitiveness area, the initial steps were taken to promote hemispheric dialogue and cooperation on crafting and introducing policies and programs on this issue. One basic objective is to encourage an exchange of best practices, experiences, and innovative approaches, and to help member states analyze and adopt those practices and then adapt them to their particular development needs (with special emphasis on micro, small, and medium-size enterprises).

The DTTC promotes association with the private sector by providing support to the Private Sector Forum of the Americas, which meets every year prior to the regular sessions of the OAS General Assembly and the Summits of the Americas. In 2006, the DCTC actively supported the Private Sector Forum that met in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, on the occasion of the thirty-sixth regular session of the OAS General Assembly and then again on the occasion of the Conference on the "Competitiveness Agenda for the Americas: Contributions of the Private Sector to the Development of the Hemisphere," held in Miami, December 5, 2006.

- Tourism

In 2006, the Tourism section continued to support individual and institutional capacity building among small tourism businesses, in keeping with the mandates set out in the Strategic Plan for Integral Development (2006-2009). Another essential mission of the Tourism section is to facilitate the holding of the Inter-American Travel Congress, where it can exchange ideas and confer with the member states, Peru in particular, to determine the dates of the next Congress and the topics on its agenda.

At the same time, the section also continued to work on the "Multi-Hazard Contingency Planning Manual", in conjunction with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), and the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO).

During this reporting period, various training programs were carried out for small tourism businesses in the Caribbean, focusing on revenue management and quality client services. In Latin America, assistance to small hotels continued and the Latin American Network for tourism development was expanded and institutionalized among the member states. Also, the job of expanding and updating the virtual resource center for small tourism businesses was an important part of the section's work in 2006.

With a view to expanding and strengthening the partnerships between the public and private sectors, agreements were signed with the Caribbean Tourism Organization and the Caribbean

Hotel Association to continue to develop small tourism businesses, training, and the business of harmonizing the Caribbean tourism industry's operating standards in the areas of health, environmental quality and services.

To help ensure that the member states take full advantage of the advances and benefits that the new technologies offer, research was done on technology use and application in the tourism business. The findings of the research were presented and discussed at the Symposium "Bringing Destinations into the Future: A Special Report on the Application of Technology in Tourism," held in Miami.

In 2006, a mission to Haiti was conducted to gather information on the tourism sector and explore its needs and its potential as a tool for economic development. Following up on that mission, project proposals were presented to obtain funds and implement programs to cultivate tourism capacities in Haiti.

- Foreign Trade Information System (SICE)

The purpose of the Foreign Trade Information System (SICE) is to compile and disseminate information on trade and economic integration at the SICE Website ([www.sice.oas.org](http://www.sice.oas.org)). SICE provides complete, up-to-date information on trade in the Hemisphere, in the four official languages of the OAS.

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

In the period 2006-2007, SICE has developed a section on novelties in trade policy, which features announcements of new developments in trade policy in the Americas. This section contains information on negotiations in progress and agreements to which countries of this Hemisphere are party. SICE also continued to update the databases in the Caribbean Trade Reference Centre, which serves the entire Caribbean. The CTRC was developed to make information available on the issues being discussed in trade negotiations, so that the Caribbean public may be better apprised of trade matters.