

Organization of American States



PROMOTING DEMOCRACY, JUSTICE, PEACE AND PROSPERITY

MEMBER STATES

THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES IS THE PRINCIPAL FORUM FOR THE CONDUCT OF INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS



The Organization of American States (OAS) promotes and supports democracy, human rights, multi-dimensional security and integral development in the Americas. The OAS seeks to prevent conflicts and to bring political stability, social inclusion and prosperity to the region through dialogue and collective action.

The 34 democracies in the Western Hemisphere comprise the active membership of the OAS. Member States are represented by their ambassadors who meet regularly at OAS headquarters in Washington, D.C. to analyze hemispheric issues and to take action as necessary. The OAS General Secretariat, with an annual budget of approximately \$150 million and a staff of 750 officials at headquarters and in 29 national offices in Latin America and the Caribbean, is led by the Secretary General, José Miguel Insulza, and the Assistant Secretary General, Albert Ramdin.

Founded in 1948, the OAS is the oldest regional organization in the world; it was built upon the Pan-American Union to promote peaceful relations in the Americas. The original concept of the OAS was to collectively achieve a secure and prosperous Western Hemisphere community of nations with “individual liberty and social justice, based on respect for essential human rights, within the framework of democratic institutions,” as stated in its founding Charter. Today, the basic tenet of the hemispheric agenda is the protection and consolidation of democracy, while respecting the principles of non-intervention and territorial integrity.

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|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Antigua & Barbuda | Dominica | Panama |
| Argentina | Dominican Republic | Paraguay |
| The Bahamas | Ecuador | Peru |
| Barbados | El Salvador | St. Kitts & Nevis |
| Belize | Grenada | Saint Lucia |
| Bolivia | Guatemala | Saint Vincent and the Grenadines |
| Brazil | Guyana | Suriname |
| Canada | Haiti | Trinidad & Tobago |
| Chile | Honduras | United States of America |
| Colombia | Jamaica | Uruguay |
| Costa Rica | Mexico | Venezuela |
| Cuba* | Nicaragua | |



SECRETARY GENERAL
Jose Miguel Insulza



ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL
Albert Ramdin

* By resolution of the Eighth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (1962), Cuba is excluded from participation in the OAS.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is the supreme organ of the Organization. It gathers the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States in one regular session each year and also holds special sessions to consider urgent matters. All Member States are represented in the General Assembly.



THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

The Permanent Council is the policy-making body of the Organization, composed of one representative from each Member State accredited by the government with the rank of ambassador. Each Member State has an equal voice and most decisions are forged through consensus. The Permanent Council has the authority granted to it in the OAS Charter, and addresses any matter referred to it by the General Assembly or by the Secretary General.



MAKING DECISIONS AT THE OAS



DEMOCRACY IN THE AMERICAS

The adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter by the OAS Member States, in September 2001, reinforced the hemispheric commitment to democracy. The Charter specifies the elements that are considered essential to representative democracy and the definition of mechanisms for multilateral action and collective guarantees to preserve democratic institutions.



ELEMENTS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL FOR REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY, AS AGREED TO BY THE 34 MEMBER STATES IN THE INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER:

- Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Access to and exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law;
- The holding of periodic, free, and fair elections based on secret balloting and universal suffrage, as an expression of the sovereignty of the people;
- A pluralistic system of political parties and organizations;
- The separation of powers and independence of the branches of government;
- Transparency in government activities, probity and responsible public administration on the part of governments;
- Respect for social rights and freedom of expression and of the press;
- The constitutional subordination of all state institutions to the legally constituted civilian authority; and
- Respect for the rule of law on the part of all institutions and sectors of society.

PRESERVATION OF DEMOCRATIC RULE

The Inter-American Democratic Charter recognizes that the countries of the region may confront critical political situations that could lead them to request OAS intervention. After assessing the situation, representatives of the OAS Member States can collectively take the necessary diplomatic initiatives, with the support of the General Secretariat, to prevent or confront an alteration of the constitutional regime, thus protecting or restoring democratic institutions.

ENFORCEMENT OF DEMOCRATIC RULE

Reiterating the “democratic clause,” first stated in the Summit of the Americas’ Declaration of Quebec City, 2001, the Democratic Charter holds that if an interruption of a democratic regime is not successfully overcome through diplomacy, and all resources are exhausted, the situation could lead to the suspension of the country’s right to participate in OAS activities.

TOOLS FOR PROMOTING AND PROTECTING DEMOCRACY IN THE AMERICAS

“The Peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it.”

—Inter-American Democratic Charter,
adopted on September 11, 2001 in Lima, Peru



OBSERVING ELECTIONS TO GUARANTEE TRANSPARENCY

The Electoral Observation Missions of the OAS have become a key instrument in the promotion and defense of democracy. These initiatives contribute to guaranteeing the integrity, impartiality, and accountability of electoral processes, as well as to strengthening the credibility of democratic institutions. These missions promote the positive recognition of political rights, particularly the citizens' right to elect and be elected in an inclusive, free, and transparent manner.

In the last 45 years the OAS observed more than 140 electoral processes, including referendums and general, presidential, parliamentary, and municipal elections, in more than 20 Member States. In 2008



the OAS observed six elections in Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Bolivia, Ecuador and Honduras.

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION

The world's first comprehensive multilateral anti-corruption agreement, the “Inter-American Convention against Corruption,” came into force in 1997. Since then, thirty-three countries have ratified or acceded to the Convention, which provides support to judicial institutions and enforcement of anti-corruption measures through legal assistance and technical cooperation.

The Follow-Up Mechanism for the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption



tracks how countries are implementing its provisions and recommends concrete measures to improve compliance.

STRENGTHENING LEGISLATIVE BRANCH AND POLITICAL PARTIES

The OAS proposes and coordinates programs to consolidate representative democracy through improving the institutional quality of the organs of political representation, primarily the legislative powers and the political parties.

PROTECTING AND PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

By identifying and analyzing potential or existing risks to democracy, the OAS, through its Secretariat for Political Affairs, helps member countries pre-



vent, manage, or resolve crises; and assists them in overcoming disruptions in democratic practices, as it recently did in Bolivia, Ecuador, Haiti and Nicaragua.

IMPROVING AND MODERNIZING STATE SERVICES

The OAS is committed to the modernization of State institutions to better serve the needs of all citizens and to improve confidence in the capacity of government entities. Programs are targeted to increase the efficiency and transparency of government institutions as well as to encourage citizen participation and evaluation of services delivered. By promoting public policies that ensure full citizens' rights, the OAS contributes to preserving democratic institutions and to strengthening the positive role of the State.

DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

The Inter-American Human Rights System promotes justice and provides recourse to people in the Americas who may have suffered violations of their human rights. The twin pillars of the system are the **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)**, created in 1959 and based in Washington D.C., and the **Inter-American Court of Human Rights**, established in 1979 and located in San José, Costa Rica.



Comprised of seven independent commissioners elected by the Member States, the IACHR promotes the observance and defense of human rights. The Commission receives, analyzes and investigates over 1,000 individual petitions annually. Since 1959, more than 12,000 cases have been processed.

The Executive Secretariat of the IACHR, at OAS Headquarters in Washington, D.C., provides legal and administrative support to the Commission.

One of the IACHR's key functions is to consider petitions from individuals who claim that the State has violated their rights and that they have been unable to find justice. The Commission may bring together the petitioner and the State to explore a "friendly settlement." If such an outcome is not possible, the Commission may recommend specific measures to be carried out by the State to remedy the violation. If the country involved is one of the twenty-one which has accepted the Inter-American

Court's jurisdiction, the case may be submitted to the Court. The Commission has the autonomy and technical capacity to monitor the human rights situation in the Member States and publishes an Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights which has been highly effective in documenting and challenging abuses in specific countries. Since 1961, commissioners or delegations have completed more than 100 visits throughout the region to review human rights policies and practices. The Commission has published over 50 special reports following those visits. The Commission offers training fellowships, organizes workshops and provides technical assistance to promote and advance human rights in the Hemisphere.

Another important activity of the Commission is the work of the Rapporteurships. Seven Rapporteurships monitor and report on human rights conditions of the peoples of the Americas, thus generating stronger commitments to protect them, as well as improving domestic laws, policies and practices on priority human rights issues in the region.

IACHR RAPPOREURSHIPS

- Rights of afro-descendants and against racial discrimination
- Rights of children
- Freedom of expression
- Rights of indigenous peoples
- Rights of migrant workers and their families
- Rights of persons deprived of their liberty
- Rights of women

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

With support from the OAS, the indigenous peoples of the Americas work together with each country's representatives to negotiate an American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The draft Declaration focuses on cultural identity and the economic and political rights of the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Inter-American Institute of Human Rights is an independent international academic institution created in 1980 and located in San José, Costa Rica. The Institute uses a multidisciplinary approach to promote and strengthen respect for human rights, and is recognized as one of the most important centers for human rights teaching and academic research in the Americas.

JUSTICE STUDIES CENTER OF THE AMERICAS

Created in 1999 and located in Santiago, Chile, the Center conducts training activities, studies and research projects in order to develop innovative approaches to judicial reform. It promotes cooperation among key sector actors, and disseminates legal instruments to improve the quality of justice in the Americas.

INTER-AMERICAN JURIDICAL COMMITTEE

With headquarters in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the Inter-American Juridical Committee serves as the legal advisory body to the OAS. The Committee is made up of 11 members nominated by the Member States and elected by the General Assembly. Topics covered include: hemispheric security, administration of justice, laws regarding information and personal data, human rights and biomedicine, illicit enrichment, transnational bribery, and cooperation against terrorism. The Inter-American Juridical Committee is presently supporting the preparation of the Draft Inter-American Convention against Racism, Discrimination and Intolerance. The OAS' Office of Inter-American Law acts as the technical secretariat to the Committee.

INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN (CIM)

The Commission is the principal forum for generating hemispheric policy to advance women's rights and gender equality. It is the first official intergovernmental agency in the world created expressly to ensure recognition of the civil and political rights of women. The Commission, known by its Spanish acronym CIM, has played a crucial role in making the participation and support of women a legitimate and indispensable part of political life in the Americas. One of its key achievements has been the development of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women. This landmark treaty was adopted in 1994 by the OAS General Assembly in Belém do Pará, Brazil, and has been ratified by 32 OAS Member States. In the last decade, the Convention has raised awareness of violence against women as a violation of human rights, and has led to positive changes in policies to protect women.

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO SECURITY

Since its inception, the OAS has used inter-governmental cooperation to promote peace in the region. Its modern security agenda recognizes new threats and focuses on stemming the tide of international criminal activity, fighting terrorism and improving public safety.

INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION (CICAD)

This Commission, known by its Spanish acronym CICAD, seeks to strengthen the human and institutional capabilities and harness the collective energy of its Member States to reduce the production, trafficking and use of illegal drugs in the Americas. Empowered by the concept of shared responsibility, CICAD assists Member States to control drug demand through education, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programs; to address supply and money laundering by training law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges as well as by developing model laws and regulations; and to promote drug-related education and research.

The **Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM)** is the hemisphere's primary instrument for assessing progress in all aspects of the drug problem. Through periodic evaluations, the MEM monitors each country's performance in fighting illicit drugs using a rigorous, peer-based methodology, and provides governments with specific recommendations on how to improve their efforts.



Likewise, the **Inter-American Drug Observatory** works with national observatories and international institutions to provide objective, reliable, up-to-date, and comparable drug-related data that enables Member States to develop evidence-based public policies and to implement more effective programs.

INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM (CICTE)

The Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism, known by its Spanish acronym CICTE, is the lead organization within the Inter-American system for coordinating efforts to protect the citizens of the OAS Member States from terrorism. Functioning through technical assistance missions, capacity building programs, and the exchange of information among national authorities, experts and decision-makers work together to strengthen hemispheric solidarity and security and help Member States comply with relevant UN resolutions and other international agreements.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States, the OAS established the CICTE

The Inter-American Defense Board is an international committee of nationally-appointed defense officials, who develop collaborative programs on common defense and security issues. As the region's oldest defense organization, the Board provides technical advice and services in areas such as humanitarian demining, disaster assistance, and confidence building measures. The Board was officially recognized as an OAS entity in March, 2006.



Secretariat to implement programs in border controls such as port security, aviation security, fraudulent documents, immigration and customs, cyber security, terrorist financing controls, counter-terrorism legislation training and consultations.

CICTE assists Member States in complying with their obligations under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) and the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism which was adopted and entered into force in 2002.

As of January 2009, 24 nations had ratified this Convention, which has improved regional cooperation in the fight against terrorism and measures to prevent, punish, and eradicate the financing of terrorism.

PREVENTION OF THREATS AGAINST PUBLIC SECURITY

HUMANITARIAN MINE ACTION

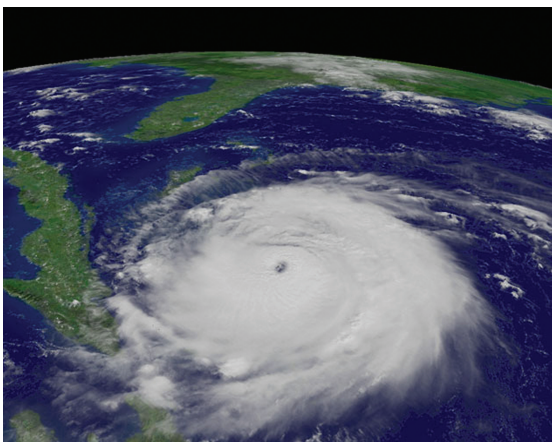
The OAS has had great success in its efforts to reduce and, ultimately, eliminate the threat posed by anti-personnel landmines in the Western Hemisphere. As of 2009, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Suriname have completed their demining programs and are considered mine-safe countries. The activities developed within the humanitarian demining program include: destruction of stockpiles and personal security of the population in mine-affected countries. This program contributes to confidence-building measures by facilitating the exchange of information between national military forces and local communities, and between neighboring countries whose common border regions are affected by the presence of landmines. The OAS provides physical and psychological rehabilitation to landmine victims, and is currently working with the governments of Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Peru on mine clearance activities and demining training programs.

FIREARMS, AMMUNITION AND EXPLOSIVES

The 1997 Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials has been ratified by 26 countries. To implement this agreement, the OAS provides assistance on proliferation, trafficking, identification, collection, stockpile management and destruction of firearms, ammunition and explosives.

CRIMINAL GANGS

Criminal gangs are increasingly associated with transnational organized crime and are becoming involved in drugs, arms, and human trafficking. The OAS is support-



ing stepped-up law enforcement, and increased implementation of prevention strategies, including creating job opportunities, and greater training and educational opportunities for young people.

SECURITY OF SMALL ISLAND STATES

The peculiar characteristics of small island States make them vulnerable to risks and threats of a multidimensional and transnational nature, such as natural disasters, sudden changes in the global economy and systematic environmental damage. To respond effectively to these threats, the OAS works jointly with island governments to identify and address their security risks, as well as to promote multilateral cooperation. The Organization has implemented a series of technical assistance programs for these States in the areas of natural hazard mitigation and adaptation to global climate change.

TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

The OAS provides technical and legal assistance to Member States within the framework of the Hemispheric Plan of Action against Transnational Organized Crime approved in October 2006. The OAS offers legal assistance and training for police, prosecutors and judges on: special investigative techniques; witness protection programs; and the effective functioning of the accusatorial criminal justice system.

FIGHTING THE CRIME OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Trafficking in persons is a major criminal activity and human rights violation that takes place within and between many countries in the Western Hemisphere and involves the exploitation of victims, most often in forced labor or commercial sexual activity, by a criminal organizer or “trafficker”. The OAS, through its Department of Public Security, conducts studies, provides training to government authorities and civil society organizations on the trafficking problem, and provides assistance for the development of national legislation on trafficking in persons.



AN AGENDA FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT

The OAS supports the Member States in their efforts to reduce poverty and to achieve greater social and economic development by fostering policy dialogue and executing technical assistance projects in the areas of sustainable development, trade, tourism and competitiveness; education, culture, science and technology; and social development and employment.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The OAS supports Member States in the design and implementation of policies, and projects to integrate environmental priorities into poverty alleviation and socio-economic development goals. Actions are implemented at the hemispheric level, facilitating international meetings and conferences on key issues of sustainable development, as well as “on-the-ground” activities.

Using this approach, the OAS works jointly with Member States to develop programs on water resource management, renewable energy, prevention of land degradation, natural hazards risk mitigation, conservation of biodiversity, sustainable management of coastal areas, and environmental law, policy and economics. Cross-cutting aspects of these programs include: the promotion of good governance, public participation and institutional transparency; institutional strengthening and capacity building; information exchange; and the advancement of gender issues and indigenous groups.

TRADE, TOURISM AND COMPETITIVENESS

TRADE AND COMPETITIVENESS

The OAS supports Member States in strengthening their institutional and human capabilities so that they can effectively participate in the negotiation, implementation and administration of trade agreements and take advantage of the benefits of broader market access and increased investments. The OAS works through partnerships with the private sector and civil society to expand trade so as to enhance economic prosperity and living standards. The OAS recently initiated a hemispheric program on competitiveness to improve the business climate and promote investment in the region.

The **Foreign Trade Information System**, known by its Spanish acronym SICE, provides access to texts of trade agreements and regular updates on developments in trade policy in the Americas.

SICE’s Caribbean Trade Reference Centers provide a comprehensive source of information on trade policy in the CARICOM countries.



TOURISM

The OAS works with international and regional tourism organizations to develop small tourism enterprises, skills training, safety and security, and research of best practices in tourism. These programs are designed to assist tourism destinations in the Caribbean and Latin America achieve competitiveness in the international marketplace.

EDUCATION, CULTURE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

EDUCATION

The OAS collaborates with Member States in their efforts to ensure quality education for all. In its role as Technical Secretariat to the **Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE)**, the OAS fosters policy dialogue and technical cooperation in areas identified as priorities by Ministers of Education. Key programs and projects include the **Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices**, the **Inter-American Teacher Educator Network**, and the **Regional Education Indicators Project**.



CULTURE

Through its role as Technical Secretariat to the **Inter-American Committee on Culture (CIC)**, the OAS coordinates knowledge-sharing workshops and policy dialogue in areas identified as priorities by the Ministers of Culture, including protecting and promoting cultural heritage, the role of culture in the development of identity, indigenous cultures, and cultural information systems.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The OAS is the Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee on Science and Technology, promoting regional cooperation and facilitating policy reform to stimulate science and technology development. OAS programs in this area focus on harmonization of weights and measures standards for trade, engineering education, biotechnologies and biosafety, popularization and use of science, and promoting a gender perspective in development and input of science in governance and public policies.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Through the Department of Social Development and Employment, the OAS supports Member States in strengthening programs aimed at the reduction of poverty, promotion of decent work practices, and the creation of employment opportunities. The OAS serves as the technical secretariat for the **Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor**, the **Meeting of Ministers of Social Development**, the **Inter-American Commission on Social Development**, the **Social Network of Latin America and the Caribbean**, and the **Joint Working Group of the Permanent Council on the Draft Social Charter of the Americas**.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION GRANTS

Through the Special Multilateral Fund of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (FEMCIDI), the OAS finances approximately 100 projects annually with about US \$7 million in grant funds. FEMCIDI projects are directed towards promoting and ensuring the development of hu-

man capacity and institutional development in Member States in eight priority areas:

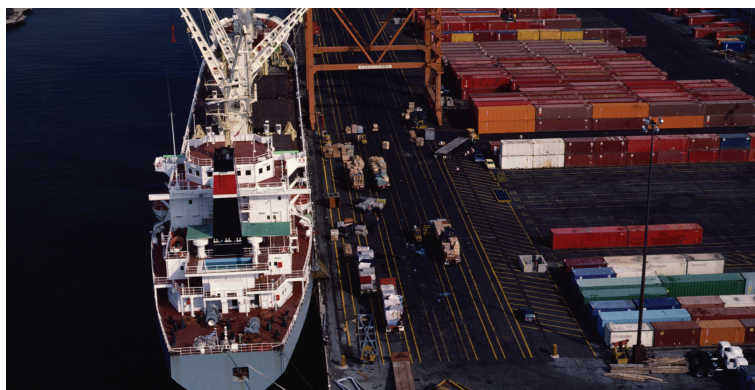
- Social Development and Generation of Productive Employment;
- Education;
- Economic Diversification and Integration, Trade Liberalization and Market Access;
- Scientific Development and Exchange and Transference of Technology;
- Strengthening of Democratic Institutions;
- Sustainable Development of Tourism;
- Sustainable Development and the Environment; and
- Culture.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING THROUGH INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

OAS Member States are taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the knowledge-based society to make governments more efficient, transparent and participatory. Through initiatives such as the **Municipal Network of Efficient and Transparent Municipalities (MuNet)**, the **Network of e-Government Leaders from Latin America and the Caribbean (RED GEALC)** and **Computers for Schools**, the OAS helps the countries of the region incorporate information and communication technologies as tools for development and public sector modernization.

INTER-AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (CITEL)

The Commission's goal is to facilitate and promote the harmonious and integral development of telecommunications and Information and Communications



Technologies (ICTs), by coordinating a common framework in the Americas. CITEC promotes public-private cooperation, exchange of information, knowledge sharing and capacity building with the aim of promoting an equitable and affordable access of all to innovative services and applications.

INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON PORTS

The Inter-American Committee on Ports is a permanent forum of the Organization represented by the highest-level national governmental port authorities, and with the active participation of the private sector. It promotes hemispheric cooperation for port-sector development and increased port security through strategic training programs, specialized technical assistance, cooperation with other international agencies, and support to local maritime port institutions.

OTHER INITIATIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT

TRUST FOR THE AMERICAS

The Trust is a non-profit affiliate of the OAS that promotes the active engagement of the private sector in the devel-



opment efforts of the Hemisphere. Empowering people to share the benefits of democracy and economic opportunity, the Trust executes targeted programs in the areas of transparency, governance, employment promotion and corporate social responsibility.

THE PAN AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (PADF)

The Pan American Development Foundation is an international nonprofit organization established in 1962 through a unique partnership between the OAS and private enterprise, to promote, facilitate, and implement social and economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean. As an OAS affiliate, PADF promotes democratic values and manages projects in four strategic areas: creating economic opportunities; strengthening civil society; promoting social progress; and responding to natural disasters.

PADF currently has offices in Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, the United States, and Venezuela and has operated in every country throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

HEMISPHERIC COOPERATION



SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS

For more than a decade, the OAS has served as the technical secretariat and institutional memory of the Summits of the Americas Process that has become the compass by which the Inter-American system sets its priorities. Since 1994, the Heads of State and Government of the region's 34 democracies have met regularly to discuss a shared vision and address the political, economic and social development challenges in the Hemisphere. In this context, the member states comprise the Summit Implementation Review Group, which follows up on mandates and prepares for future Summits.

In the spirit of partnership, the Summits of the Americas Process gathers 12 institutions of the inter-American and the United Nations systems in the Joint Summit Working Group. This Group supports the countries in Summit preparations, and provides technical advice and resources for the implementation of Summit mandates in their areas of expertise.

The OAS has broadened the participation of social actors in government decision-making, through its outreach to



civil society, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and the private sector, which are fully engaged in contributing ideas to the Summit Process as well as monitoring and implementing Summit initiatives.

MINISTERIAL PROCESS

One function of the specialized areas of the OAS is to support regional ministerial meetings that are held periodically as part of the Summit Process. These meetings foster dialogue, strengthen cooperation in specific sectors, and ensure that policies are carried out at the national level. The OAS convenes many of these ministerial meetings, prepares documents for discussion and tracks the implementation of its mandates.

The OAS also assists with the planning, coordination, preparatory work and actual holding of sectoral meetings leading up to the ministerial meetings, in the areas of education, justice, labor, science and technology, defense, culture and sustainable development. For example, the OAS provides assistance to the Ministers of Justice or Attorneys General of the Americas as they develop common justice policies for the region.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

“Through its unique convening power, the OAS is able to provide leadership in the inter-American system by bringing together 34 Member States from this Hemisphere; 63 Permanent Observers from Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa; and international organizations and specialized agencies to give political momentum to critical areas in development, democracy and security.”

—Albert Ramdin, OAS Assistant Secretary General

Since its founding, the OAS has sought to expand the institutional foundation of the inter-American system. This interest in the region’s progress has evolved over the years, resulting in the creation of partnerships with institutions such as the **Inter-American Development Bank**, the **Pan American Health Organization**, the **Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture**, the **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean**, as well as the **Andean Development Corporation**, the **Central American Bank for Economic Integration**, the **Caribbean Development Bank**, and the **World Bank**.



system by bringing together 34 Member States from this Hemisphere; 63 Permanent Observers from Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa; and international organizations and specialized agencies to give political momentum to critical areas in development, democracy and security.”



The OAS maintains strong relationships with the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**, which promotes economic and social development in the region through multilateral funds and direct technical assistance. The IDB was created under the auspices of the OAS and today these organizations are, respectively, the preeminent economic development and political institutions of the region.

THE UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES

The OAS has signed more than 25 cooperation agreements with institutions of the United Nations system. These agreements cover issues from disaster mitigation, electoral assistance, management of natural resources, and social and economic development, to migration and labor-related initiatives and cooperative programs

with the **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean**, the **International Organization for Migration**, the **International Labor Organization**, the **United Nations Development Program**, and the **United Nations Industrial Development Organization**. At the **World Trade Organization**, the OAS and its agencies participate as observers at the Regional Trade and Development Committees and manage joint training programs for trade negotiations. New areas of collaboration have been developed with the **African Union** and the **Council of Europe**.

OAS’ SPECIALIZED ORGANIZATIONS

OAS specialized agencies work on specific issues of regional interest. For example, the **Pan American Institute of Geography and History**, located in Mexico D.F., conducts

training in the areas of cartography, geography, history and geophysics. Similarly, the **Inter-American Indian Institute**, an entity created in 1940, disseminates information related to the improvement of living standards among Indian communities, including legislation and jurisprudence, and promotes research and training for the development of these communities.

The **Inter-American Children’s Institute** promotes and protects the rights of children by collecting and disseminating information about the condition of minors, and by studying child, adolescent and family-related issues. The Institute, based in Montevideo, Uruguay, makes specific proposals to governments on issues related to children and adolescents and the means to improve their lives.

The **Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture**, with headquarters in San José, Costa Rica, encourages and supports the efforts of its Member States to foster agricultural development and rural well-being; the **Pan American Health Organization** is the public health agency that works to improve health and living standards in the Americas.

SUB-REGIONAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

The OAS is engaged with multilateral political institutions in the Americas. The **Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM)**, the **Association of Caribbean States**, the **Organization for Eastern Caribbean States**, the **Central American Integration System**, the **Andean Community**, the **Latin-American Integration Association**, and the **Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)** are actively cooperating with the OAS.



The OAS is increasingly engaging new partners in reaching its goals. Using modern technologies such as webcasting and delivering up-to-date information over the Internet, the OAS provides the international community with comprehensive information on its activities and inviting active participation in discussions of the hemispheric agenda.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The **OAS' Lecture Series of the Americas** was created in 2004 to enrich the hemispheric debate on key issues of the Inter-American agenda. Monthly conferences take place with participation of prominent speakers from throughout the world, invited to share their experiences and expertise with the general public on topics such as democracy, human rights, multidimensional security and integral development.

To reach beyond our Member States, the OAS invites countries from outside the Hemisphere to observe our important intra-regional diplomacy in the search for solutions to regional issues. Currently there are 63 **Permanent Observers** following high-level political dialogue and making substantial financial contributions to OAS programs.

To increase awareness of the role, structure, and performance of the OAS, sessions of the **Model OAS General Assembly (MOAS)**, a simulation of the OAS General Assembly, are held each year at OAS Headquarters and

in different countries of the region, engaging over 1,000 high school and college students in debates on political, economic and social issues.

Following on Articles 6 and 26 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the OAS promotes the participation of civil society organizations in all their activities.

OAS briefings are offered to diplomats, government officials, military officers, university faculty, policy analysts, students and the general public. Briefings include tours of the building and presentations of the work of the Organization.

Launched in January 2007, the **OAS Policy Roundtable series** seeks to enrich discussions of the hemispheric agenda by bringing analysts and the diplomatic community to dialogue on key issues affecting the region. This program is designed to promote dialogue among specialists and political decision-makers on a full range of OAS issues.

PERMANENT OBSERVERS (63)

Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, People's Republic of China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, the Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Latvia, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Morocco, Nigeria, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Republic of Serbia, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, Vanuatu, and Yemen.



The rich mosaic of people and cultures of South America, Central America, North America and the Caribbean comes alive in the pages of the **Americas Magazine**, the full-color, bimonthly publication of the OAS. Through in-depth articles and high-quality photography, Americas Magazine offers information on OAS programs and an update on the reality of the Hemisphere, from Argentina's Patagonia to the Canadian caribou wilderness.

The **Columbus Memorial Library** houses one of the most complete repositories of materials on the Inter-American system in the world. Its extensive collection includes inter-American treaties, books, periodicals, photographs, maps and records of the history of the Organization of American States and its predecessor agencies since 1535. Today, the Columbus Memorial Library is responsible for the Archives and Records Management Program of the OAS General Secretariat.

OAS cultural resources, including its historic buildings, concerts and exhibits, contribute to further awareness and appreciation of the regions' arts and cultural traditions. Its **Art Museum of the Americas** has an extensive permanent collection dating back to 1949, with particular emphasis on contemporary

“This is a policy-making organization. Policy is not only a matter of values; positive results also count, achieved through public policies that put the principles of our hemispheric community into action.”

— José Miguel Insulza, OAS Secretary General



TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Opinion leaders
- International and regional institutions
- Think tanks and universities
- Government officials
- Legislators
- Military officers
- College and high school students
- Civil society and private sector groups

visual arts from Latin America and the Caribbean. The museum's art archives complement the collection and displays the broad diversity of artistic expression found in the region.

The **OAS internship program** provides a unique opportunity for graduate and undergraduate students to acquire significant knowledge of the OAS, its activities, structure, and relations within the Hemisphere.

*In support of the work of all the departments of the OAS, the **Secretariat for External Relations** builds awareness of and encourages concrete support for the activities of the OAS as the premier regional political forum in the Western Hemisphere. It strengthens institutional relations with Member States, Permanent Observer countries, regional and international organizations, civil society, academic institutions, and private sector entities in order to implement the inter-American agenda mandated by hemispheric leaders.*

*The **Department of International Affairs** is responsible for advising the Secretary General and the OAS Secretariat, as well as the Organization's policy-making bodies, on external relations and resource mobilization. Its main functions focus on strengthening and maintaining relations with the Permanent Observers of the OAS, advising the technical departments on their external relations and resource mobilization activities, carrying out the monthly *Lecture Series of the Americas*, establishing strategic alliances with civil society, sister agencies in the UN and the Inter-American system to advance the OAS agenda, organizing policy roundtables and briefings for diverse audiences on OAS priorities and work, and coordinating the *Model OAS General Assembly for high schools and universities*, in order to promote a better understanding of the Organization's mission to improve the lives of all citizens in the Americas.*

Organization of American States: Democracy, Justice, Peace and Prosperity.

p. : col. ill. ; cm.

ISBN 978-0-8270-5242-0

1. Organization of American States. 2. Democracy--Americas. 3. Political participation--Americas. 4. America--Foreign relations--20th century. 5. America--Foreign relations--21st century.

OEA/Ser.D/XIV.5 2008

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