



Organization of American States

**WORKING IN BENEFIT OF THE
CITIZENS OF THE AMERICAS**





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MEMBER STATES

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



SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAS
José Miguel Insulza



ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAS
Albert R. Ramdin

¹ On June 3, 2009, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Americas adopted Resolution AG/RES.2438 (XXXIX-0/09) which resolves that the 1962 Resolution that excluded the Government of Cuba from its participation in the Inter-American system, ceases to have effect in the Organization of American States (OAS). The 2009 resolution states that the participation of the Republic of Cuba in the OAS will be the result of a process of dialogue initiated at the request of the Government of Cuba, and in accordance with the practices, purposes, and principles of the OAS.



The Organization of American States (OAS) is the principal political forum in the Hemisphere for multilateral dialogue and establishing the inter-American agenda.

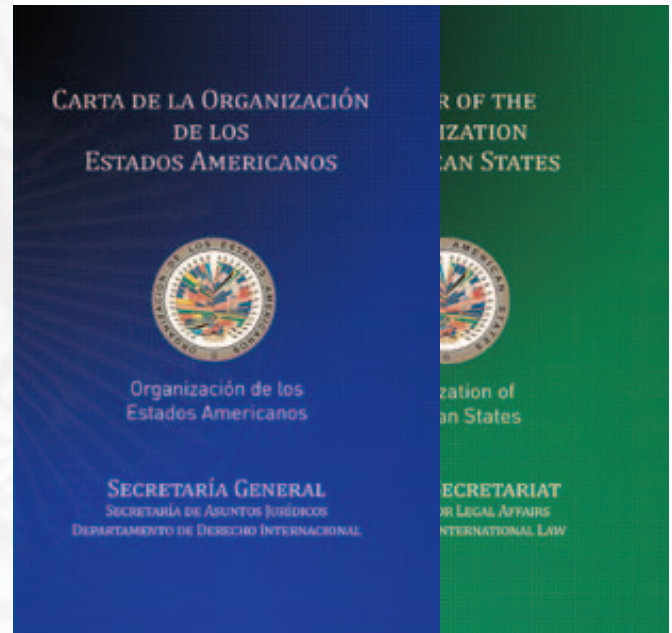
Through dialogue and collective action, the OAS performs a fundamental role in the promotion of democracy, peace, human rights, multidimensional security and integral development in the Americas. Its creation during the Ninth Inter-American Conference that took place in Bogota, Colombia on April 30, 1948 constituted a historical moment in inter-American relations and made the concept of a legal hemispheric identity a reality.

The First International Conference of American States, inaugurated on October 2, 1889 in Washington, D.C., created the International Union of American Republics and the Trade Office, which acted as the Secretariat until 1910, when it became the Pan-American Union. For half a century, the Pan-American Union was the forum for signing agreements and conventions that institutionalized legal, economic, social and cultural cooperation in the Americas.

CHARTER OF THE OAS

The Charter of the OAS defines the essential purpose of the hemispheric institution: “The American States establish by this Charter the international organization that they have developed to achieve an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence.” It recognizes that democracy is indispensable for the stability, peace and development of the region and that one of the purposes of the OAS is to promote and consolidate democracy with due respect for the principle of nonintervention.

The Charter of the OAS has been modified four times through the Protocols of Buenos Aires (1967), Cartagena de Indias (1985), Washington (1992) and Managua (1993).



help to eradicate extreme poverty in the region. It also allowed for the suspension of an OAS Member State if its democratically-elected government was overthrown by force.

In addition to the Protocol of Washington, Resolution AG/RES. 1080 (XXI-O/91) “Representative Democracy”, which was adopted one year earlier, constituted a regional effort to strengthen democracy by creating the possibility to convene an immediate meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Hemisphere in the event of an interruption to the democratic political institutional process and to examine the issue.

For its part, the Protocol of Managua established the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) to facilitate cooperation among the Member States on economic and social matters.



The Protocol of Buenos Aires established the current structure of the Organization and the Protocol of Cartagena de Indias strengthened its political role in the Hemisphere. Later, the Protocol of Washington put forth that one of the fundamental purposes of the OAS is to promote the economic, social and cultural development of the Member States through cooperative action, and



INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER

On September 11, 2001, the OAS Member States adopted the Inter-American Democratic Charter in a special session of the General Assembly in Lima, Peru, thereby reinforcing their commitment to democracy. The Charter is the most important instrument to strengthen democratic institutions in the region.

The Democratic Charter outlines the elements that are considered essential in a democracy and defines multilateral mechanisms for action and collective guarantees for the preservation of democratic institutions. Similarly, it recognizes the possibility that countries of the region may face critical political situations that could lead them to request intervention by the OAS. The Member States' representatives, after evaluating the situation, can adopt the necessary diplomatic measures, collectively and with the support



of the Secretary General, to prevent an alteration to the constitutional regime, protect and restore democratic institutions.

Upon reiterating the democratic clause, pronounced for the first time in the Declaration of the Summit of the Americas of Quebec in 2001, the Democratic Charter holds that any interruption to the democratic order that cannot be resolved through diplomacy, and after exhausting all other resources, can result in the suspension of a country's right to participate in OAS activities.

The Inter-American Democratic Charter defines the essential elements of representative democracy as the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; access to and the exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law; the pluralistic system of political parties and organizations; the holding of free and periodic elections; and the separation and independence of powers, among others.



SOCIAL CHARTER OF THE AMERICAS

The Social Charter of the Americas was adopted by acclamation by the Member States during the XLII General Assembly held in Cochabamba, Bolivia in 2012. In the Social Charter, the Member States commit to searching for a greater economic, social and cultural development, and eliminating poverty and inequality. The Charter recognizes that “the peoples of the Americas legitimately aspire to social justice and their governments have a responsibility to promote it. Development with equity strengthens and consolidates democracy, since the two are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.”

The Charter recognizes the contributions of indigenous peoples, afro-descendants, and migrant communities and notes the need for governments to adopt “policies to promote inclusion and to prevent, combat, and eliminate all forms of intolerance and discrimination, especially gender, ethnic, and race discrimination, in order to safeguard equal rights and opportunities and strengthen democratic values.”



OAS ORGANS

The OAS carries out activities through the General Assembly, Meetings of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Councils (Permanent Council and Inter-American Council for Integral Development), General Secretariat, specialized conferences, specialized organizations and other entities established by its governing bodies.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is the Organization's supreme organ. It brings together the Member States' Ministers of Foreign Affairs every year in regular sessions and also in

special circumstances. Each State has the right to a vote and the General Assembly decides on the Organization's action and general policy, determines the structure and functions of its organs, approves the program-budget, sets quotas and considers issues regarding relations among the Member States.

PERMANENT COUNCIL

The Permanent Council is composed of one representative from each Member State, appointed with the rank of Ambassador. Its purpose is to consider affairs assigned to it by the General Assembly or Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, ensure the maintenance of relations among Member States, contribute to the pacific solution of controversies and act as the Preparatory Committee of the General Assembly.



The Permanent Council has established five Committees:

- General Committee
- Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP)
- Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP)
- Committee on Hemispheric Security (CHS)
- Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities (CISC)

The Permanent Council establishes other ad-hoc committees or working groups when necessary.

MEETING OF CONSULTATION OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs is celebrated in order to consider problems of an urgent nature and of common interest to the OAS Member States. Any Member State may request that a Meeting of Consultation be called. The request must be addressed to the Permanent Council of the Organization, which decides by an absolute majority whether a meeting should be held.

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

The General Secretariat of the OAS executes the programs and policies agreed upon by the General Assembly and other political organs. Its headquarters is based in Washington, D.C. and it has offices in the majority of the Member States. The Secretary General is responsible for the management of the General Secretariat and the supervision of its staff.

The Secretary General is elected by the General Assembly for a period of five years. He may not be reelected more than once or succeeded by a person of the same nationality. He acts as the legal representative of the General Secretariat and participates with a voice, but without a vote in all of the Organization's meetings. He can call the attention of the General Assembly or Permanent Council to any issues that, in his opinion, could affect the peace and security of the Hemisphere or the development of the Member States.

The Assistant Secretary General is the Secretary of the Permanent Council. During the temporary absence or disability of the Secretary General, he shall perform his functions. In the event that the position of Secretary General is vacant, the Assistant Secretary General shall assume his duties until the General Assembly elects a new Secretary General for a full term and he has been sworn in.

INTER-AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT (CIDI)

The CIDI was created in 1996 through the Protocol of Managua with the objective to promote integral and sustainable development in the Americas. It is formed by representatives at the ministerial level, appointed by the Member States in accordance with the topics discussed. It focuses on the formulation and design of policies, the exchange of experiences, and the creation of networks and partnerships with other institutions for the development and implementation of cooperation projects for development.

The CIDI organizes ministerial meetings:

- Ministerial of Education
- Ministerial of Social Development
- Ministerial of Labor
- Ministerial of Culture
- Ministerial of Science and Technology
- Ministerial of Sustainable Development
- Ministerial of Tourism

The structure of the General Secretariat includes:

- Secretariat for Political Affairs
- Executive Secretariat for Integral Development
- Secretariat for Multidimensional Security
- Secretariat for Administration and Finance
- Secretariat for Legal Affairs
- Secretariat for External Relations
- Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

PROMOTING DEMOCRACY IN THE AMERICAS

The OAS contributes to the strengthening of political processes in the Member States and to sustaining democracy as the best option to guarantee peace, security and development

ELECTORAL OBSERVATION AND COOPERATION

The Organization carries out electoral observation missions as a key instrument to promote and defend democracy, contribute to guaranteeing the integrity, impartiality and accountability of electoral processes, and strengthen the credibility of democratic institutions. The missions foment the positive recognition of political rights, particularly the right of citizens to elect and be elected in an inclusive, free and transparent manner.

Since the dispatch of the first electoral observation mission in 1962 to Costa Rica, the OAS has participated, as an observer, in more than 200 electoral processes, including in general, presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections and in referenda in more than 20 Member States.

SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY AND SPECIAL MISSIONS

The OAS formulates recommendations and provides technical support for the prevention, management and resolution of crises and conflicts. For these purposes,



it coordinates special and political accompaniment missions, and manages the Peace Fund to contribute to the pacific solution of territorial disputes, such as the territorial differendum between Belize and Guatemala, where the Office of the OAS General Secretariat in the Adjacency Zone conducts verifications and implements projects designed to strengthen integration among border communities and supports community resettlement efforts.

Since 2004, the OAS has supported the Government of Colombia through the Mission to Support the Peace Process (MAPP/OAS), which has the objective to verify the peace process and the delivery, custody and destruction of weapons turned in by illegal armed groups. The MAPP/OAS also supports initiatives by the government, civil society and other entities aimed at reducing violence, building confidence and reconciliation, as well as strengthening democracy.



ENHANCING STATE SERVICES FOR AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

The OAS is committed to effective public management, transparency in state agencies, citizen participation, preservation of democratic institutions and strengthening the effective role of the State. It offers support to the Member States to achieve national development goals through comprehensive technical assistance programs and training, civil registry, cadastre, and public-private partnership strategies for the formulation of public policies.

Through initiatives like the Efficient and Transparent Municipalities program (MuNET) and the Network of e-Government Leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean (Red GEALC), the OAS cooperates with the countries of the region to incorporate information and communication technologies as tools to modernize the public sector.



FACILITATING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

In order to facilitate access to justice in the Americas, the OAS implements the Inter-American Program for the Development of International Law and offers advisory services for the codification of inter-American law. It acts as the depository and a source of information for inter-American treaties and agreements of the OAS and its organs, and it coordinates the Inter-American Judicial Facilitators Program with the goal to reinforce access to justice for citizens that live in the most isolated rural areas.

The judicial facilitators are community leaders with a disposition for service and volunteerism whose functions include assisting judges with legal procedures,

disseminating laws and civic norms among the population, accompanying people in legal cases, and coordinating actions with municipal governments.

The OAS acts as the Secretariat of the Inter-American Juridical Committee; Meetings of Ministers of Justice or other Ministers or Attorneys General of the Americas (REMJA) and the Conference of States Party; the Working Group to Examine the National Reports Envisioned in the Protocol of San Salvador; the Working Group to Prepare the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Working Group to Prepare Draft Legally Binding Inter-American Instruments against Racism and Racial Discrimination and against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance.

In addition, supports the Working Group on the Protection of the Rights of Older Persons, and the Consumer Safety and Health Network (CSHN).



implementation. The OAS supports said States in the design, implementation and evaluation of their norms and policies on access to public information.

With respect to the protection of personal data, the Organization assists Member States in making decisions related to the harmonization of law, the improvement of regional cooperation, and the search for substantive elements on this subject.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

The Inter-American Convention against Corruption represented the first multilateral agreement against corruption in the world, which has been in effect since 1997. To date, 31 countries have ratified the Convention.

In 2002, the Member States launched the Mechanism for Follow-up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC) as an instrument to support States Party in the implementation of the provisions of the Convention through a process of reciprocal evaluations, based on conditions of equality, where recommendations are formulated with respect to those areas in which there are legal gaps or in which further progress is necessary. The Convention and the MESICIC constitute the principal cooperation instruments to prevent, detect and eradicate corruption in the Americas.

PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In relation to persons with disabilities, OAS efforts are oriented toward promoting the two main normative instruments of the Inter-American System on the subject: The Inter-American Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (CIADDIS), and the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (PAD).

PROMOTING THE RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION OF AFRO-DESCENDANTS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The OAS is firmly committed to the complete eradication of racism and discrimination and to fostering the rights of the Afro-descendant population. In 2005, a working group was instituted with the mandate to elaborate draft Legally Binding Inter-American Instruments against Racism and Racial Discrimination and against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance.

Since 1999, the OAS has been in the process of negotiating the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This working group has included the active participation of representatives from both Member States and indigenous peoples.

ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

The General Assembly of 2010 approved the Model Inter-American Law on Access to Public Information with a view to providing Member States with a legal framework necessary to guarantee this right and a guide for its

DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS

The Inter-American Human Rights System comprises the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), established in 1959, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, created in 1979.

INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (IACHR)

The IACHR, with its headquarters in Washington, D.C., has seven independent commissioners elected by the Member States. It is autonomous to promote the observance and defense of human rights in the Member States and is charged with publishing an annual report on this topic.

Since 1959, the Commission has processed more than 13,000 cases and receives, analyzes and investigates more than 1,000 individual petitions per year in order to determine the responsibility of the States for violations to human rights guaranteed in the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, the American Convention on Human Rights, and other inter-American treaties on this subject. In relation to the cases presented, the Commission can invite the petitioner and the State to explore a “friendly settlement” and, if that is not possible, it can recommend for the State to implement specific measures to remedy the violations. If the country involved is one of the 21 that has accepted the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the case can be submitted to the Court.



The IACHR has eight rapporteurships and two units that present reports about the human rights conditions of vulnerable groups, thereby achieving improvements in the national legislation, policies and practices on issues related to human rights in the region:

- Freedom of expression
- Rights of women
- Migrant workers and their families
- Human rights defenders
- Indigenous peoples
- Persons deprived of liberty
- Afro-descendants
- Children
- Unit for the Rights of Lesbians, Gays, Trans, Bisexuals and Intersex Persons
- Unit on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights



INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights is composed of seven judges, nationals of the OAS Member States, who are elected in an individual capacity from among jurists of the highest moral authority and of recognized competence in the field of human rights. The Court is an autonomous legal institution of the OAS whose objective is to apply and interpret the American Convention on Human Rights and other treaties on this topic, and to safeguard the essential rights of men and women in the Americas.

The Inter-American Specialized Conference on Human Rights was celebrated in San Jose in November 1969 where the delegates of the OAS Member States approved the American Convention on Human Rights, which went into effect on July 18, 1978. To date, 25 countries have ratified or acceded to the Convention.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO SECURITY

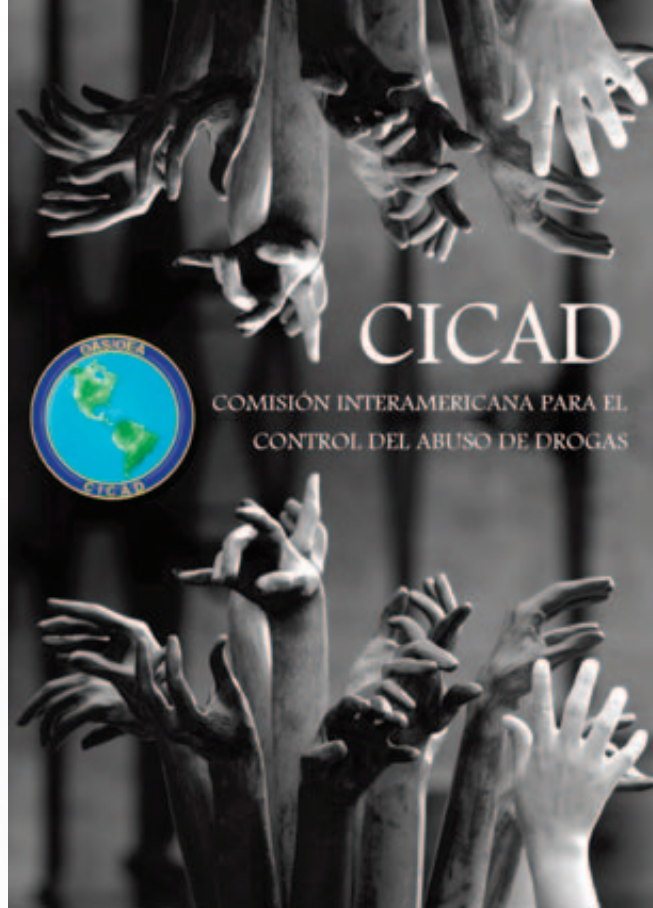
Through a multidimensional approach, the modern security agenda of the OAS recognizes new threats and aims to stop the advancement of transnational organized crime, fight terrorism, improve public security and combat the trafficking of illicit drugs.

In 2003, the OAS Member States adopted the Declaration on Security in the Americas, which defined a multidimensional concept of security that included traditional and new threats, such as trafficking of persons, terrorism, drugs, and transnational organized crime, among others.

INTER-AMERICAN DRUG ABUSE CONTROL COMMISSION (CICAD)

The CICAD's mission is to strengthen the Member States' human and institutional capacity to reduce the production, traffic and consumption of illicit drugs and address their health, social and penal consequences. It manages and implements action programs focused on preventing and treating drug abuse; reducing the supply and availability of illicit drugs; strengthening the institutions and mechanisms for drug control; developing alternate sources of income for coca, poppy and marijuana farmers; assisting Member States to improve the gathering and analysis of data about all aspects of the drug issue; and measuring progress in the fight against this problem.

Moreover, the CICAD's Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID) has the goal to help countries enhance the collection and analysis of data related to drugs by



promoting the creation of national observatories and the use of methods and standardized data. It also facilitates scientific and technical training and the exchange of experiences among professionals that work in the field of drugs.

In 2010, the OAS Member States adopted a new hemispheric strategy on drugs that emphasizes the respect for human rights, confronts drug addiction as a chronic and recurring disease, and proposes a more comprehensive approach to treating the drug problem.

The Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) was created in 1999, and is the primary instrument to measure the actions taken by the Member States against illicit drugs. This evaluation is carried out through the elaboration and publication of national and hemispheric reports on the progress in drug control. The evaluation reports are drafted by government experts designated by OAS Member States. The MEM contributes to the systematic collection of information about drugs, the exchange of experiences and helps States identify areas that require greater levels of cooperation.



INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE AGAINST TERRORISM (CICTE)

The CICTE coordinates efforts designed to protect citizens of the Member States against terrorism.

Its objectives are to improve the exchange of information among competent national authorities; create and update an inter-American database on issues related to terrorism; formulate a proposal to assist Member States to draft appropriate legislation against terrorism; and compile treaties and bilateral, subregional and multilateral agreements signed by Member States on this topic. The CICTE promotes the universal adherence of international conventions against terrorism, enhanced border cooperation, security measures related to travel documentation and the implementation of training and crisis management activities.

The CICTE offers support to the Member States to fulfill their obligations emanating from Resolution 1373 (2001) of the United Nations Security Council and the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, the latter of which has been ratified by 22 Member States to date. Such ratifications have significantly contributed to improving regional cooperation in the fight against terrorism and to adopting measures to prevent, punish and eradicate the financing of terrorism.

PREVENTING THREATS AGAINST PUBLIC SECURITY

In order to reinforce the fight against crime, violence and insecurity, the OAS has held three Meetings of Ministers of Public Security in the Americas (MISPA) since 2008. The MISPA serves as the principal hemispheric forum for the exchange of information and experiences, and for strengthening cooperation.



HUMANITARIAN DEMINING

The First MISPA took place in Mexico City in 2008 where the Member States adopted the Declaration “Commitment to Public Security in the Americas.” The following year, the Ministers of Public Security of the region met again in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and reiterated their commitment to confronting threats to public security from a human rights perspective and agreed to institutionalize the MISPA process, celebrating biannual meetings in odd years. The Third MISPA was held in 2011 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago under the central theme of cooperation for police management.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) adopted in 1997 has been ratified by 33 Member States. With the goal to foster compliance with the mentioned agreement, the OAS offers support and technical advice to the Member States on humanitarian action against mines, including their removal, education about risks, and physical and psychological rehabilitation for victims of landmines.

The Organization has contributed to the complete elimination of the threat of anti-personnel mines in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Suriname. It continues to execute demining programs in Colombia and in the Cordillera del Condor region between Ecuador and Peru.



COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

The OAS' efforts to combat trafficking in persons are centered on the areas of prevention, processing criminals and protecting victims. Through collaboration with non-governmental organizations and with the Member States, the Organization offers training, the exchange of information and other means of assisting police agencies, immigration officials, judges, legislators and others in creating laws to combat trafficking in persons and promoting governmental initiatives to identify existing cases.

FIREARMS, AMMUNITION AND EXPLOSIVES

In compliance with the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials (CIFTA), adopted in 1997 and ratified by 30 Member States, the OAS provides assistance in the areas of proliferation, trafficking, identification, collection, handling, storage and destruction of firearms, ammunition and explosives.

GANGS

Gangs are increasingly associated with transnational organized crime and have begun to get involved in issues related to drugs, weapons and trafficking in persons. The OAS supports law enforcement and a better implementation of prevention strategies that include the creation of job opportunities, as well as training and education for the youth.



FOSTERING INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY

The OAS supports Member States' efforts to reduce poverty and achieve greater social and economic development through the promotion of political dialogue and the implementation of projects in the areas of sustainable development and environment; trade; tourism and competitiveness; education; culture; science and technology; and social development and employment.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The OAS supports the Member States in the design and implementation of policies and programs geared toward integrating environmental priorities with socioeconomic development goals at the hemispheric level. Programs focus on the sustainable management of water resources and coastal areas, renewable energy, prevention of soil erosion, natural disaster risk reduction, and conservation of biodiversity. The OAS also carries out programs in the areas of law, policy and environmental economy.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The OAS aids Member States so they can enjoy the benefits of trade, tourism and corporate social responsibility, as well as the use of science, technology and innovation for sustainable growth through political dialogue, the exchange of experiences and best practices, strategic partnerships and the development of business opportunities in the Americas.

The OAS Competitiveness Program fosters productivity and competitiveness in the Member States by means of dialogue, cooperation and initiatives to strengthen public





policies build human and institutional capacities and strengthen MSMEs.

The OAS contributes to the efforts of the Member States to advance development with equity through the promotion of policies and programs to reduce poverty. In this sense, the Organization supports the Inter-American Social Protection Network (RIPSO).

The Inter-American Competitiveness Network was launched in September 2009 on the occasion of the III Americas Competitiveness Forum that took place in Santiago, Chile with a view to promote horizontal, south-south and triangular cooperation among authorities and competitiveness councils

Through the Migration and Development Program (MIDE) and the Continuous Reporting System on International Migration (SICREMI) the OAS promotes the development of public policies aimed at improving migratory management in the Americas. In addition, the Organization promotes the preservation and protection of the cultural heritage of the Americas.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

OAS supports Member States in their efforts to ensure quality education and to promote human development, decent work and employment creation. As the Technical Secretary of the Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE), fosters political dialogue and technical cooperation in areas that the Ministers of Education identify as priorities.

The Organization also maintains a scholarship program for academic studies and professional development for citizens of the Member States that are distributed in the broadest and most equitable way possible. Additionally, supports the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL) and the Inter-American Teacher Network.



The OAS acts as the Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor; the Ministerial and High-level Meetings of Social Development; the Inter-American Committee on Social Development; the Joint Working Group of the Permanent Council and CIDI on the Draft Plan of Action of the Social Charter of the Americas; and the Committee on Migration Issues of the CIDI.

SPECIALIZED ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER AGENCIES

INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN (CIM)

The Inter-American Commission of Women is the principal forum for hemispheric policy to advance women's rights and gender equality. Established in 1928, CIM was the first official intergovernmental agency in the world created expressly to ensure recognition of the civil and political rights of women.

CIM performs a crucial role in ensuring that the participation of and support to women constitute an indispensable part of political life in the Americas, and in creating awareness that violence against women is a violation of human rights. The CIM's efforts have resulted in positive changes in legislation and policies for the protection of women, such as the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, adopted in 1994 and ratified by 32 OAS Member States

INTER-AMERICAN JURIDICAL COMMITTEE (IAJC)

The IAJC, with headquarters in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, serves as the legal advisory body to the OAS. The Committee is made up of 11 members designated 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 IAJC has the capacity to submit independent legal opinions regarding the topics on the inter-American agenda.

INTER-AMERICAN CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE (IIN)

The purpose of the IIN is to improve the living standards of children and their families. The IIN serves as a social action center and conducts programs in the areas of health, education, social legislation, social services and information. The IIN offers technical assistance in policy formulation and in planning activities for the development, monitoring, and evaluation of programs designed to improve management in homes that care for children and in national agencies that coordinate such homes.

INTER-AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (CITEL)

The CITEL was established by the OAS General Assembly in 1993 as the region's principal forum where the Member States and the telecommunications private sector meet to coordinate the ongoing development in this field. CITEL has Permanent Consultative Committees (PCC), and is composed of all of the Member States and of associate members representing private telecommunication companies and agencies, Permanent Observers, and regional and international organizations.

INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON PORTS (CIP)

Since its inception in 1998, the CIP serves as an inter-American forum to strengthen cooperation and development of the port sector with the active collaboration and participation of the private sector. The CIP acts as the advisory body of the OAS and is responsible for proposing policies that respond to the common needs of the port sector in the Hemisphere.

INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS (IIHR)

The IIHR is an international academic institution, created in 1980, with its headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica. The IIHR's mission is to strengthen respect for human rights and to contribute to democracy through education, academic research, technical assistance and the dissemination of knowledge on human rights doctrine by means of specialized publications. The IIHR cooperates with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the IACHR; it works with civil society, Member States, and international organizations.



JUSTICE STUDIES CENTER OF THE AMERICAS (JSCA)

The Justice Studies Center of the Americas, created in 1999 and based in Santiago, Chile, conducts training activities, studies and empirical research projects in order to develop innovative approaches for judicial reform. The JSCA promotes cooperation and the exchange of experiences among key actors of the justice sector, and disseminates legal instruments to improve the quality of justice in the Americas.



SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS

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The Summits of the Americas Process is the space in which the Heads of State and Government of the Member States define and discuss the inter-American agenda. This process is chaired by the host government of the Summit.

For more than a decade, the OAS has served as Technical Secretariat and institutional memory of the Summits of the Americas Process. To date, the host States have included the United States, Bolivia, Chile, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago and Colombia. Since January 15, 2013, Panama has chaired the process in preparation for the VII Summit of the Americas that will be held in that country in 2015.

The Member States are part of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), which is responsible for the follow-up on the implementation of the mandates and the preparation of future Summits.

The OAS has been successful in broadening social actors' participation in the governmental decision-making process, involving civil society, workers' organizations, academic institutions and the private sector, offering each of these an important role in the Summits Process by contributing ideas and observing and implementing initiatives that emanate from the Summits.

The Group supports the countries in preparation for the Summits and provides technical assistance and resources to implement the Summits mandates in their areas of specialization. It is composed of: The OAS (acts as Chair); Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA); Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); World Bank; Development Bank of Latin America (CAF); Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI); Caribbean Development Bank (CDB); International Organization for Migration (IOM); International Labor Organization (ILO); and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION – STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Since its creation, the OAS has worked to expand the institutional foundation of the Inter-American System. This continued interest in the progress of the region has evolved through the design of strategic partnerships and the signing of cooperation agreements on priority topics of the inter-American agenda with institutions such as PAHO, IICA, CAF, IDB, CABIE, CDB, World Bank, and institutions of the United Nations system that include ECLAC, ILO, UNDP and with the African Union, Council of Europe, International IDEA, among others.

PERMANENT OBSERVERS

The OAS created the status of Permanent Observer in 1971, recognizing the interest of diverse countries that are not Member States in following the Organization's activities and meetings, deepening their relations with the Member States, and learning in detail the political situation of the region.

Their support has made many success stories possible across the Hemisphere, contributing resources for priority OAS projects that range from electoral observation missions to outreach activities, demining programs, human rights initiatives, including promoting the participation of indigenous peoples, access to justice and building the capacity of vulnerable communities, among others.



Permanent Observers to the OAS (68): Albania, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, People's Republic of China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Vanuatu and Yemen.



CIVIL SOCIETY

The OAS has made great advances with respect to civil society participation, especially in facilitating spaces for dialogue and developing mechanisms that permit participation in political forums, the execution of projects, the development of cooperation programs, and the exchange of experiences and information that allow public policies to be formulated in response to the needs of the citizens of the Americas.

To date, more than 400 civil society organizations are registered with the OAS and hundreds of cooperation agreements have been signed between the OAS General Secretariat and civil society, many of which are still in effect and have contributed to supporting the tasks we undertake.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The OAS Art Museum of the Americas boasts an extensive permanent collection of modern and contemporary art and exhibits the works of renowned regional artists with a particular concentration on contemporary visual arts of Latin America and the Caribbean. The museum's archives complement the collection and reflect the broad diversity of artistic expression found throughout the region.

The Columbus Library houses one of the most complete collections in the world of the Inter-American System that includes inter-American treaties, books, newspapers, photographs, maps and records of the OAS history, some of which date back to 1535.

The OAS Lecture Series of the Americas has the objective to enrich the hemispheric debate of the inter-American agenda through conferences with world-renowned speakers that are invited to share their experiences and knowledge with the public-at-large. Similarly, the OAS Policy Roundtables bring together political analysts with the diplomatic community to dialogue on priority topics that affect the region.

The Informative Sessions about the work carried out by the OAS are offered to diplomats, governmental employees, military officers, academia, political analysts, students and the general public.





YOUTH

Recognizing the importance of youth, the OAS created the Inter-Departmental Youth Group that shares information and looks for areas of cooperation to promote innovative and significant projects that serve future generations of citizens in the Americas.

The OAS Internship Program provides a unique opportunity for university students to acquire extensive knowledge of the OAS, its activities and structure.

The Model OAS General Assembly (MOAS) promotes a greater knowledge among the youth of the Americas about the role of the Organization. More than 1,000 students participate in the MOAS annually.

The OAS Youth Agenda is based on three pillars:

- **Dialogue:** institutionalization of a dialogue with youth to reinforce or incorporate mechanisms for their participation in the political framework of the OAS
- **Education:** building capacity to improve the employability and increase equal opportunities
- **Empowerment:** supporting the role of young leaders in the Member States, fostering the exchange of best practices, and including their opinions in the programs and activities of the OAS.



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