

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

Under Article 115 of the Charter of the OAS and in keeping with the policy and practice decided upon by the General Assembly and in the respective resolutions of the Councils, the Office of the Assistant Secretary General serves as the Secretariat of the Permanent Council, provides advisory services to the Secretary General, and is in charge of the activities that the Secretary General entrusts to him.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary General provided advisory services to the Secretary General, supported the activities of the various dependencies of the General Secretariat, and made efforts to assist the member states in the search for solutions to topics of critical importance to them.

In his capacity as Secretary of the General Assembly, the Assistant Secretary General coordinated technical and operational services for the thirty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly, held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, United States, in June 2005. He also supervised the preparatory technical work for the thirty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly, to be held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in June 2006.

In the same capacity, he coordinated technical and operational services for the thirty-first and thirty-second special sessions of the General Assembly, which adopted the scale of Regular Fund quota assessments and the ceiling of the 2007 budget, and the Statutes of the Inter-American Defense Board, respectively.

As Secretary of the Permanent Council and its subsidiary organs, the Assistant Secretary General provided the chairs of those bodies with policy support and guidance and facilitated deliberations on their respective agenda items. The Office of the Secretariat of the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation, the Permanent Council, and Subsidiary Organs assisted representatives of the member states and permanent observers in the preparation and holding of regular and special meetings of the Council and of protocolary meetings, at which Heads of State and Government were received. Likewise, it provided support to joint meetings of the Council with the Permanent Executive Committee of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CEPCIDI) and meetings of the Joint Working Group of the Permanent Council and CEPCIDI on the Draft Social Charter of the Americas.

During the period covered by the report, the Office of the Assistant General Secretariat coordinated a number of special and closed meetings of the Permanent Council, as well as periodic coordination meetings between the Council chairs and the regional coordinators.

Support and coordination of this type were also provided in other instances, such as meetings of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE); the Conference of the States Party to the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA) and meetings of the Consultative Committee of the CIFTA; and meetings of the Special Committee against Transnational Organized Crime, the Working Group to Prepare the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Working Group to Prepare a Draft Inter-American Convention against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance, and the Joint Consultative Organ of the Committee on Hemispheric Security and CEPCIDI on Natural Disaster Reduction and Risk Management.

As a result of the entry into force of Executive Order 05-13 Rev. 1, the Office of the Assistant Secretary General--in addition to performing its statutory functions as Secretariat to the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation, the Permanent Council, and Subsidiary Organs—has under it the Office of Conferences and Meetings, the Office of Cultural Services, which includes the Columbus Memorial

Library and the Art Museum of the Americas; the Coordinating Office for the Offices and Units of the General Secretariat in the Member States; and the Coordinating Office for the Specialized Units, which includes the Permanent Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), the Office of the Director General of the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN), the Secretariat of the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL), and the Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee on Ports (CIP). Because operating budget funds have not been allocated for the Coordinating Office for Specialized Units and the Office of Cultural Services, these areas currently have no specific coordinator. Despite its limited human resources, the Office of the Assistant Secretary General has maintained a system of communication and consultation with the specialized entities and is developing a comprehensive plan to review the actual functioning of the entities and optimize areas of synergy among them. In addition, the Office has been successful in reviving the Group of Friends of the cultural services. These groups, composed of the permanent representatives of the member states, together with private-sector representatives, have established a joint endeavor to improve the functioning of these entities and improve the integration of programs and projects in the new strategic plan of the Organization.

The Resource Mobilization Committee, chaired by the Assistant Secretary General, was established by Executive Order. Its secretariat is the Department of External Relations. The Committee is working in close coordination with the Office of the Secretary General and the Secretariats for Administration and Finance, Political Affairs, Multidimensional Security, and Integral Development.

In addition to the topics covered by these areas, the Office of the Assistant Secretary General, on instructions from the Secretary General, has been coordinating the Secretariat's activities in the area of natural disasters. In this regard, it worked closely with the Department of Sustainable Development and the pertinent organs, agencies, and entities of the inter-American system. Special attention was paid to specific disasters in countries that had led to the convocation of meetings of the executive committee of the Inter-American Committee on Natural Disaster Reduction. Likewise, measures were taken to obtain contributions from the Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund for countries affected by natural disasters.

The Assistant Secretary General continued to provide ongoing support to the Secretary General in the political affairs of the OAS member states and represented him in numerous meetings and forums. Of special note are the efforts by the Assistant Secretary General to find solutions to the political and institutional crisis in Haiti, by means of various visits to the country during the period covered by this report. The Assistant Secretary General represented the Secretary General at a number of international meetings at which the subject of Haiti was discussed.

In December 2005, the Assistant Secretary General led the Electoral Observation Mission to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In addition, he represented the Secretary General at the inauguration of President Manuel Zelaya of Honduras, on January 26, 2006.

Office of Conferences and Meetings

The OCR was established by Executive Order 05-13 Rev. 1. It is made up of the Office of the Director and three sections: Conference Services, Language Services, and Printing, Distribution, and Information Services.

The OCR continued to develop and consolidate its support and services infrastructure for meetings of the political bodies. It provided assistance for planning and organizing the logistical and services structure for 697 OAS meetings, which entailed the preparation and negotiation of agreements and the mobilization of financial, human, and technological resources at OAS headquarters for meetings in the host countries.

It updated the biannual and annual meeting schedule systems and the mechanisms for making more efficient use of conference services resources. It provided support to the CAAP by successfully overseeing and managing the Regular Fund subprogram for funding unprogrammed OAS meetings, including the thirty-first special session of the General Assembly, in January 2006.

Working with the Office of Information and Technology Services (OITS), the OCR replaced and modernized conference services equipment and facilities by installing technologically advanced, digital equipment. The Simón Bolívar Room was completely renovated and re-inaugurated, in coordination with the Department of Press and Communications of the General Secretariat and the OITS. It now operates with state-of-the-art equipment that, in addition to a conventional name-handling system, has highly sophisticated audio/video multimedia services, integrated and compatible with real time videoconferencing in four languages.

Moreover, the OCR replaced all of its document reproduction equipment with high-speed digital machines, and refurbished the document archives and recovery system in the Documentation Center, which services the Permanent Council in the Simón Bolívar Room.

The OCR and the Department of Budgetary and Financial Services completed an overhaul of the OASES system's administrative procedures for OAS meetings. With the OITS, it also set up a computerized platform for conference services as well as Internet access to these services, available to all users. Consequently, users are able to check the schedule of meetings online, obtain official meeting documents, consult a database of references, and view meetings.

Conference Services

In the area of conferences, at headquarters the OCR coordinated 670 meetings of the political and technical bodies, the Permanent Council and its subsidiary organs, CIDI and its subsidiary bodies, and the other specialized organs and agencies, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL), the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), and the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN). The member states provided the venues for 60 high-level meetings, including the thirty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly, the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth regular sessions of CICAD, technical meetings of the IACHR, CITEL, CICAD, and the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD), and 815 other meetings.

During this period, the OCR updated a biannual schedule of the Organization's meetings, as an instrument for making better use of necessary conference services resources.

Language Services

The OCR provided translation and simultaneous interpretation in the four official languages to all meetings of organs, agencies, and entities of the Organization, at headquarters and in the member states, servicing a total of 697 meetings. More than 44,000 pages were translated into the four official languages. The policy of modernizing equipment and programs for language services (TRADOS) and the four-language glossary called MultiTerm continued. It continued to expand its roster of freelance translators and interpreters, with the addition of professionals from the member states. The Section also kept up inter-institutional contacts for sharing glossaries and terminology with other international organizations and expanded the e-library of OAS documents on the Internet. An added effort has been made to add the names of more translators and interpreters living in all the member states, which represents potential savings for the host countries when meetings are held away from headquarters.

Printing, Distribution, and Information Services

The OCR reproduced and distributed official documents of the Organization, which entailed the printing of master documents, copying, distribution, and storage. The OCR provided the permanent missions of the member states and permanent observers with assistance in searching for information.

Some of the Section's activities over the past year are listed below:

- Printing and distribution of 5,345 individual documents, involving a total of 4,476,932 pages.
- Printing and distribution of 9,325 invitations for the Art Museum of the Americas and the Office of Protocol.
- Continued data storage and documents management through the IDMS system.

Office of Cultural Services

The Office of Cultural Services (OSC) was established by Executive Order 05-13 Rev. 1. It consists of the Columbus Memorial Library and the Art Museum of the Americas.

Columbus Memorial Library

The Library is currently the repository of the institutional memory of the Organization of American States, the Pan American Union, and the inter-American system. Over the years, the Library has evolved from a traditional library program to one that includes the General Secretariat's archives and records management system. It is also the depository of OAS documents.

In 2002 the Permanent Council decided to allocate US\$300,000 from the Reserve Subfund to the Columbus Memorial Library to provide access to its documents and archives. The Library initiated three projects and in 2005, as part of the Documents Retrospective Conversion Project, 10,549 catalogue cards were scanned to make them available online. The files will appear in standard OCLC MARC format in the On Line Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), reaching a broad client base via the Internet and the Organization's Web page.

Work on the Preservation and Digitization Project continued. It will produce digital images of a select group of Permanent Council resolutions and declarations and of the Proceedings and documents of the General Assembly. A total of 50,000 images were identified for digitization and in 2005, 9,310 images of OAS documents were scanned and checked for quality control.

In November 2005, the Integrated Library Automation System developed by TLC ("The Library Corporation") was installed, and training was provided on its use. The system enables the Library to provide services to automate all library functions, including acquisitions, serials, circulation, OAS documents, and cataloguing, thus providing access to the Columbus Memorial Library's rich collection on the inter-American system.

Donations helped supplement the Library's limited budget in the acquisitions area, which received and processed 1,534 books and periodicals and prepared 43 purchase orders from requisitions received from other OAS departments for the purchase of books and other materials. Likewise, 4,054 United Nations documents were added to the collection.

The Documents Retrospective Conversion Project was completed, with 10,549 catalogue cards of OAS publications scanned to make them available online. The Library continues to assign the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and CIP ("Cataloging-in-Publication") data for new OAS publications and documents. In 2005, 166 ISBNs were assigned and 51 CIPs were prepared. This ensures that new

OAS publications and documents will be immediately available in the online catalogue. The Library continued to publish the “Selective List of Books Accessioned and New Periodicals Received in the Columbus Memorial Library.” This information may be found in the Library’s Public Folder on the Intranet.

The demand for reference services is still on the rise, even as the Library provides access to resources that support OAS programs. The Library is helping to meet current research needs and the Archives are documenting and providing access to important past events.

The Reference Unit circulated 11,068 books and 4,624 periodicals and answered 5,212 requests for information. A total of 127 cubic feet of photographs of historical value were used to respond to these requests. The Documents Control Unit also saw an increase in requests and answered some 1,423 requests for information, while the Archives Management Unit answered 398. A total of 9,001 photocopies were made for the General Secretariat, the missions, and outside users.

The use of various databases has enabled Reference Services to increase its servicing capability. The Library subscribes to “First Search” and can provide access to information in 70 databases, covering a wide range of subject matters, with access to thousands of libraries worldwide and to 5.9 million articles in electronic format from 9,000 periodicals, including 3,500 e-zines.

The search version of the “Hispanic American Periodicals Index” (HAPI) provides global data on Central America, South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean, the U.S.-Mexican border region, and Hispanics in the United States. The Library continues to have access to “WorldCat,” the “United Nations Treaty Collection Database,” and “Lexis-Nexis.” It also subscribes to “The Economic Intelligence Unit – Selected Country Profiles” and the “Official Document System of the United Nations On Line.”

With regard to OAS documents and publications, a total of 74,200 documents were received, processed, and circulated, and search aids were prepared to assist in the recovery of these documents, with 23 new classifications provided for OAS documents.

In the area of preservation, the Library processed and microfilmed the OAS Official Records Series and sent it to university and specialized libraries. Proceeds from sales that help the Library fulfill its mandate of seeking external sources of funding resulted in deposits of \$80,310 into the Hipólito Unanue account.

The Archives and Records Management Service (ARMS) has a contract with “Iron Mountain” and “Paxton Records” for storage of the Organization’s records at a site away from headquarters. A total of 4,893 boxes are stored with the outside contractors. The Archives and Records Management Center received 357 boxes of semi-active documents for storage; it sent 479 empty boxes to offices for transferal of their records to ARMS; and it permanently processed valuable records, which were also stored. ARMS has 10,692 cubic feet of General Secretariat files in its custody.

The Columbus Memorial Library mounted four exhibits: Columbus Memorial Library – Depository of the institutional memory of the Organization of American States, Donations by Ecuador to the Columbus Memorial Library, the Panama Canal – on the occasion of the visit of the President of the Republic of Panama to the OAS, and CARICOM.

The Columbus Memorial Library has benefited greatly from the assistance of the interns and volunteers assigned to specific projects and of the Group of Friends of the Columbus Memorial Library, a topic included on the order of business of the Permanent Council meeting of September 23, 2005.

Art Museum of the Americas

During the period covered by this report, the Museum focused on conservation activities and on the promotion of its resources, in particular the physical structure of the Museum building, the permanent collection, the art archives, and the audiovisual collection.

As regards the building, major renovation and restoration work was undertaken with the help of donations from the permanent observer missions of China, Qatar, and Turkey to improve access to the building, conserve it, and enhance its appearance in terms of both aesthetic and historical considerations, including a redesign of the foyer, with the installation of a reception desk and a marble floor, and restoration of the original doors and wooden staircases. As part of the project, a color guide for visitors was printed, with a brief summary of the building's history and the Museum's major programs.

During the period under consideration, 11,200 people visited the Museum's exhibits, either on guided tours or independently. The four exhibits from the permanent collection during this period—*Art of the Print* (74 works), *Jamaica in the Collection* (10 works), *The Language of Objects* (56 works), and *Geometry and Gesture* (62 works)—explored diverse thematic and technical facets of the permanent collection, with all regions of the Americas well represented. The exhibits were reviewed in *Contemporary Impressions: the Journal of the American Print Alliance* (spring 2005), *InPrint* (March 2005), *El Tiempo Latino* (April 2005), *Gaceta Iberoamericana* (spring 2005), and *The Washington Post* (November 19, 2005).

Because of the renovation work being done in the Permanent Council meeting room, the satellite gallery in the main building was closed and exhibits in that gallery were suspended until an alternative space could be found. In the meantime, an exhibit selection committee, made up of Museum staff and experts from outside cultural institutions, was established. The committee met once in November 2005 to review 69 exhibit proposals received by the Museum. A selection was made from this group for consideration as possible future exhibits.

To reinforce the educational component of the exhibits, the Museum gave guided tours and lectures to 39 groups (905 people) from universities, high schools, and educational and cultural associations. In addition, the following were held: three children's workshops, with the participation of guest artists exploring exhibit-related topics; 20 classes for adults on drawing and silk-screening techniques; and a lecture by art historian Dr. Edward Sullivan, Dean of Humanities of New York University. With support from the Inter-American Development Bank, a color catalogue on the Museum's graphic collection was printed. Educational information on the exhibits continues to be posted on the Museum's Web page, in order to reach a wider audience.

As part of the "Art-in-Office" program, 194 works of art from the permanent collection are on loan to the offices and public areas of the buildings at headquarters. In connection with that activity, preventive conservation work was done, including cleaning, replacement of glass with UV Plexiglas, and consolidation of pictorial layers. Likewise, the loan forms to be signed by the offices were revised in order to improve record-keeping of the works of art loaned out internally.

During this period, 15 donations were made to the permanent collection, including prints by Edith Behring (Paraguay), Félix Ángel (Colombia), Rudy Ayoroa (Bolivia), and Antonio Seguí (Argentina); photographs by Diego Cifuentes (Ecuador); and paintings by Beatriz Briceño (Panama) and Jaime Colson (Dominican Republic).

The art archives are a one-of-a-kind source for the study of Latin American and Caribbean art. As a means of promoting this resource, a new section was added to the Museum's Web page, on the contents

and organizational structure of this documentation. During this period, the Museum responded to 950 requests for information, and 38 researchers from various institutions visited the Museum to consult the art archives in person. Further, 35 boxes of materials previously stored at a site away from headquarters were processed, and pertinent materials and documents were incorporated into the art archives. The Museum continues to receive and process new bibliographic materials sent by artists, galleries, and diverse cultural institutions, in order to enrich and expand the archives.

Further, 180 images from the permanent collection were digitized for use in the Museum's database (an automated integrated collection system for cataloguing and tracking works of art). The Museum initiated the first phase of conversion--from VHS to digital format--of the film collection on the art and artists of the member countries, to enhance preservation and improve sales potential. In addition, films were loaned to the Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network (HITN), a communications network that promotes the educational, social, cultural, and economic development of the Hispanic community in the United States. These films will be shown as part of HITN's cultural programs.

Added to the inventory were 150 works of art that are not part of the permanent collection and were previously stored away from headquarters. They have not been included in the permanent collection for the following reasons: (1) the artists are already represented in the collection with works of equivalent or better quality; (2) they are in poor condition; or (3) they did not meet the criteria established by the Acquisitions Committee for inclusion in the collection. This is the category of works of art that are sold at the art sales organized by the Museum for fundraising purposes, or that are donated to schools and cultural institutions.

The Museum arranged for the donation of eight works of art to the Latin American Youth Center, an organization nationally recognized for its efforts in support of the Hispanic and Caribbean community of Washington, D.C.; it participated in a cultural program on Latin American women artists, organized by the Women's Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts; it attended monthly meetings of the museum consortium "Neighbors to the President" to exchange information and develop activities to promote the member museums' collections and programs; and it collaborated with the Staff Association on the VII Annual Art Exhibit.

During this period, \$17,090 was raised from the sale of art, videos, slides, catalogues, reproduction fees, and rentals of the Museum building. Further, donations were obtained, through the Department of External Resources, from the Governments of China (\$20,000), Qatar (\$10,000), and Turkey (\$6,000) for restoration of the Museum building, and a \$10,000 donation was received from the Government of Brazil for the publication of a guide on Brazil's representation in the Museum's collections. Moreover, several interns and volunteers assisted the Museum during this time by working in such areas as the cataloguing of works of arts, documentation of archives, and preventive conservation of the graphic art collection.

Coordinating Office for the Offices of the General Secretariat in the Member States

The Coordinating Office for the Offices of the General Secretariat in the Member States was established by Executive Order 05-13 Rev. 1 to support services rendered at the hemispheric level through various bodies.

In order to optimize services in the various member states, the directors of all OAS General Secretariat offices in the region were invited to visit headquarters on January 19 and 20, 2006. The main focus of the meeting was sharing with the directors the strategy and approach adopted for meeting the expectations of the offices in the member states in 2006. The meeting was an opportunity for familiarization with the vision of the new General Secretariat administration and for broad dialogue and an exchange of ideas

among staff of the General Secretariat offices in the member states and headquarters staff. Such a meeting had not been held for almost two decades.

Among the various topics addressed, it bears noting that in the area of democracy and good governance, the offices of the General Secretariat in the member states will further facilitate dialogue, access to training activities, and technical support to the governments. The offices have also recognized the importance of working more closely with NGOs in promoting OAS activities. This collaboration will continue and be reinforced to the extent that the office directors continue to receive strategic guidance and support from headquarters and seek to seek greater familiarity with the national agenda of their host country.

In his dialogues with the office directors, the Secretary General emphasized the importance the present administration attaches to the offices of the General Secretariat in the member states. He urged them to increase their receptivity, their responsibility, and their dedication to the goals and objectives of the Organization while observing the applicable rules and procedures. The Assistant Secretary General indicated that his office, being charged with coordinating the offices in the member states, will work to ensure that the offices have the proper levels of support and attention from the Coordinating Office. He also recalled that it was important that the directors abide by operating procedures and guidelines received; exercise responsible leadership and management; and of demonstrate responsibility in complying with internal controls, as instructed by executive orders, administrative memorandums, the Office of the Inspector General, and the Department of Human Resources.

The meeting was also an opportunity to exchange ideas with the directors on how they could play a more significant and supportive role at their duty stations; and how they could be equipped to act as more effective representatives of the Organization, to promote efficient diplomacy and good public administration, and to improve understanding and exchange among the peoples of the Americas. The office directors also had a chance to converse with the Chair of the Permanent Council, the Office of the Inspector General, and a number of assistant secretaries and directors from various areas. As a result of the meeting, the directors contributed various ideas, initiatives, and suggestions, for a strategy document that was to be drafted.

Other activities of the Coordinating Office included facilitating, in December 2005, the acquisition of 15 computers and 13 scanners to improve efficiency at the OAS offices in member states. The new computers were duly equipped with the appropriate software and licenses and sent to offices where equipment requirements had been identified beforehand. The use of scanners has begun to reduce the use of facsimile communications and will eventually eliminate the need for faxes, producing savings for the offices. The Coordinating Office continues to work with the Office of Information and Technology Services to improve efficiency in the field. To that end, an Internet-based telephone system is being tested. The trial period will end on May 15, 2006. To date, 21 countries are participating in this technology. The voice-over-Internet protocol (VOIP) mechanism allows offices to communicate with each other and with headquarters as if making local calls; this removes the high cost of long-distance calling.

In accordance with resolution AG/RES. 2157 (XXXV-O/05), the report on work plans for 2006 has been submitted. It addresses the various activities of the OAS in the context of the priority areas identified in the mandates of the Summits of the Americas process and of the OAS General Assembly. These activities include programs and projects in the areas of democracy and human rights, provision of technical cooperation, support to the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), support to CICTE in fighting terrorism, natural disaster reduction, sustainable development, and education.