



VIII Summit
of the Americas
LIMA · PERU · 2018



Policy Dialogue

Corruption and COVID-19

Within the Follow-Up and Implementation of the VIII Summit of the Americas

Date: Thursday, June 18, 2020 – 11:00 a.m. (EST – Washington, D.C.)
Duration: 2 hours
Organizer: Summits of the Americas Secretariat
Participants: Civil servants and civil society in the region
Mode: Virtual

This Dialogue is one of a series of cooperation initiatives undertaken by the Summits of the Americas Secretariat in connection with execution of the Follow-up and Implementation Mechanism of the "Lima Commitment: Democratic Governance against Corruption" with participating States, the institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), civil society, and social actors. Through this virtual session, the idea is to share experiences and thoughts about the risks of corruption during emergencies and the role that justice system operators and oversight bodies can play to safeguard integrity in measures adopted in response to the crisis.

Introduction

Corruption is embedded in the countries of the region, poses a threat to democracy, and seriously undermines institutions. During states of emergency, national and subnational governments are endowed with special powers that increase the potential for corruption. Even though those powers are granted for a limited amount of time, the risks they entail are high and may even impair oversight by one branch of government over others. What are those risks? What provisions have been taken to mitigate them? What concrete steps can be taken to detect those risks in advance and prevent them from materializing? What part should the Legislative Branch play in political oversight during emergencies? Have oversight bodies performed appropriately?

Against that backdrop, multilateral organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) attempt to foster integrity in the public policies pursued in the region by working directly with public administrations in an effort to enhance their operational capacity. This Dialogue seeks to expand cooperation among the States that took part in the VIII Summit of the Americas and the institutions in the Joint Summit Working Group in respect of specific aspects geared to advancing implementation of the "*Lima Commitment: Democratic Governance against Corruption.*"

The goal on this occasion is to share national experiences and reflection on what is happening in the region, focusing on efforts to combat corruption during states of emergency; examining such matters as the state bodies responsible for oversight and audits; integrity in public office; transparency and accountability; and the strengthening of legal procedures and frameworks to curtail the sway of private interests in public policy decision-making.

The Summits of the Americas Secretariat of the OAS Secretariat for Hemispheric Affairs fosters Policy Dialogues as a forum for analysis and exchanges among the stakeholders of the

Summits of the Americas process, including the participating States, JSWG institutions, civil society representatives, and other social actors, as well as interested actors.

Program

I. *Introduction* to the virtual session, María C. Conte, Interim Director, Summits Secretariat

II. *Opening remarks*

- Ambassador James Lambert, OAS Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs.
- Ambassador Luis E. Chávez, Office of the Chair of the Summits Process, Government of Peru

III. *Speakers*

- Dr. Fernando Carrillo, Inspector-Attorney General of Colombia
- Dr. Susana Silva Hasembank, Secretary for Public Integrity of the Office of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of Peru
- Dr. Claudia Escobar Mejía, former Guatemalan Judge of the First Instance, member of Ecuador's Commission of International Experts to Combat Corruption, and Executive Director of BeJust

Moderated by: Dr. Pablo Sanguinetti, Vice President of Knowledge at CAF-Development Bank of Latin America

IV. *Question-and-answer session*

V. *Conclusions*

Other aspects

1. Simultaneous (Spanish/English) interpretation and sign language services will be available.
2. The Dialogue will be recorded and published for wider dissemination.
3. Slide presentations will be distributed.
4. Minutes of proposed actions and recommendations will be kept and distributed.

Regarding the Summit of the Americas

The VIII Summit of the Americas (Lima, Peru, 2018) culminated in the adoption by Heads of State and Government of 57 mandates or concrete measures to prevent and combat corruption summarized in the "Lima Commitment: Democratic Governance against Corruption." The mandates cover a wide range of fields, including the importance of public integrity, transparency initiatives and public accountability for government acts, citizen monitoring and oversight, and the role of oversight bodies in preventing and combating corruption. The Summits Secretariat of the OAS General Secretariat, as the Technical Secretariat for the Summits of the Americas Process, is mandated to lend

assistance to member states with implementing Summit mandates and initiatives and to follow up on implementation of the mandates derived from the VIII Summit of the Americas and earlier Summits.

Any questions regarding this Dialogue may be addressed to Nohra Eugenia Posada, a specialist with the Summits Secretariat, at: nposada@oas.org.