



## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION INICIATIVES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FIRST INTER AMERICAN MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH LEVEL AUTHORITIES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The overarching and cross-cutting themes for this Meeting include public and citizen participation, good governance, gender equality and the inclusion and respect of indigenous peoples.

In order to guarantee a wide participation of civil society during the preparatory process of the Ministerial Meeting, the OAS' Department of Sustainable Development (DSD) conducted a series of outreach and public consultations, in order to inform civil society of the objectives of the Ministerial meeting, and provide an opportunity for civil society to contribute to the outcomes of the Meeting. These initiatives, described below, also contribute to the promotion of good governance and democratic engagement to support sustainable development in the region.

### **Informative Bulletin**

Two informative bulletins, providing information on the agenda and planning steps for the Ministerial Meeting, were sent to approximately 2,500 civil society groups from all over the hemisphere, through electronic means as well as regular mail (for those groups, including indigenous groups, that may lack access to the internet). The bulletins included a summary of the recommendations provided in each of the technical workshops, and a summary of the comments and recommendations posted on the virtual consultation forum.

### **Virtual Consultation Forum**

The Forum, being co-managed by the Development Gateway, has been on-line since May 2006. It helped to provide civil society groups with the opportunity to track the planning of the Ministerial Meeting, and provide comments and suggestions for Governments. The Forum will continue to be open after the Ministerial Meeting to (a) present civil society with information regarding the Ministerial Declaration; that is adopted at the end of the Meeting ; (b) provide on-going information regarding the Ministerial follow-up process; and (c) continue to provide a space for civil society and indigenous peoples to have direct and instant communication with the Secretariat in matters related to sustainable development.

More than 2,500 civil society organizations were invited to participate in the Forum and reminders were sent regularly. Contributions to the Forum were posted by participants from all over the world. A report with the summary of comments posted in the Forum (CIDI/RPE/RIMDS/doc.2/06) was formally presented to the CEPCIDI Working Group on Sustainable Development to be considered in their deliberations for the preparation of the draft Declaration of Santa Cruz + 10.

Recommendations in the report include:

- The need for consideration to be given to the connection between environmental health , and sustainable development, and the links with education and respect for traditional knowledge and technologies.
- The need for investment in the development of indigenous communities. More help is needed from the international community.
- The need to create awareness within the population regarding sustainable development, particularly related to economy, ecology, equity, spirituality and empowerment.



## **Local Consultations**

In order to facilitate broad-based participation of civil society during the preparatory process of the Ministerial Meeting, and to facilitate the dialogue between civil society and different community groups on the fundamental themes related to regional sustainable development, the DSD, in cooperation with the Canadian International Development Agency and the Summits of the Americas Secretariat, organized a series of local consultations with civil society. These consultations took place in:

- Buenos Aires (August 28)
- La Paz (September 12)
- Washington, DC. (September 14)
- Panama City (September 15)
- Port of Spain (September 19)

More than 200 people from 120 civil society organizations concerned with the three main thematic areas of the Ministerial Meeting participated in these consultations, organized with the collaboration of local authorities. The objective of these consultations was to obtain comments and recommendation from the organizations that attended these consultations to be considered in the preparation of the draft Declaration of Santa Cruz + 10. The Secretariat prepared a Consolidated Report with the recommendations from all five local consultations (CEPCIDI/GT/DS/doc. 65/06) that was formally presented to the CEPCIDI Working Group on Sustainable Development.

Recommendations in the report include:

- Promote the role of the media in fostering integrated water resources management, through awareness campaigns aimed at civil society.
- Ensure and promote sharing experiences and best practices in managing risks of natural disasters.
- Consider and value the economic, social, and environmental impacts resulting from the expansion of the agricultural sector.

## **Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Participation during the Ministerial Meeting**

### *Roundtable with Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Representatives*

It is expected that more than 30 representatives from civil society organizations and indigenous peoples will attend this roundtable to be held on Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The objectives of this meeting are to: (a) review the background documents prepared for the Roundtable, including the Consolidated Report with comments and recommendations from consultations in Buenos Aires, La Paz, Panama City, Port of Spain, and Washington DC; the Report with Recommendations from Virtual Consultation Forum; and the draft Declaration of Santa Cruz +10; (b) generate dialogue and recommendations among those representatives from civil society organizations and indigenous peoples that will be attending this meeting; and (c) prepare the document with a final set of recommendations and comments to complement the results from the local consultations and the Virtual Forum.

### *Presentation of recommendations by representatives of civil society organizations*

The results from the document prepared during the *Roundtable with Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Representatives* will be formally presented to the Ministers and High-Level Authorities by three representatives from civil society, one per thematic area, during the First Plenary Session on Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup>.