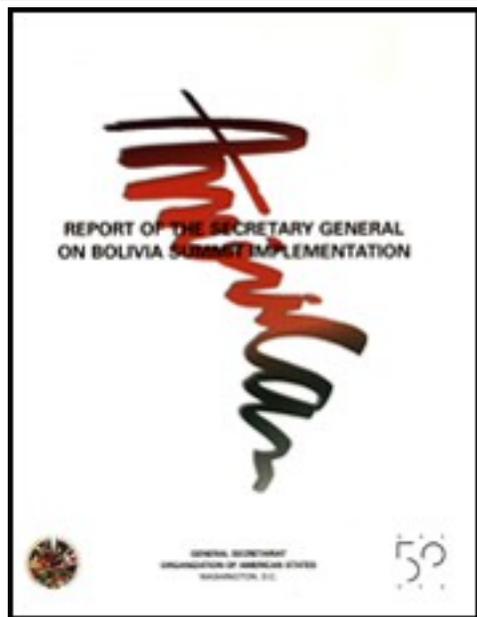


Report of the Secretary General on Bolivia Summit Implementation



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GENERAL SECRETARIAT

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

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I. Introduction

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In the context of the institutional arrangements set up in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, the Secretary General of the Organization American States was given the mandate to submit a report on progress attained in the implementation of the initiatives of the Plan of Action on Sustainable Development. The report, to be made available prior to the 1998 Summit of the Americas, was intended as a follow-up on the commitments entered into in Bolivia. This paper is in compliance with the coordinating and follow-up roles entrusted to the OAS.

Background

The Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development held in Santa Cruz in December of 1996 will perhaps be cited by historians as an effort which put the Western Hemisphere ahead of the rest of the world as the first region to prepare a blueprint on sustainable development within the framework of the global agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992. The Declaration of Santa Cruz built on the Rio Declaration and consolidated at the political level an understanding of the concept of sustainable development that reflects specific conditions in the Americas. The Bolivia Plan of Action also had the effect of setting priorities for the Western Hemisphere within the broad range of issues addressed in Agenda 21.

At the Summit of the Americas in Miami in 1994, the countries of the hemisphere reiterated their commitment to sustainable development and agreed on a series of actions to protect and ensure the efficient use of renewable natural resources and to combat pollution. At the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States held in Barbados in 1994, these governments further defined their priorities for action. Taken together with Agenda 21, the agreements reached in Miami and Barbados were the pillars on which the Bolivia Plan of Action was built.

In addition to mandating the holding of the Bolivia Summit in 1996, the Miami Plan of Action had called for "subsequent annual sustainable development ministerials," thereby setting in motion a significant process of inter-American dialogue on this issue. The Bolivia Summit gave additional impetus to this process.

The Bolivia Plan of Action is ambitious and includes initiatives in the areas of health, education, agriculture, forests, biodiversity, water resources and coastal areas, cities, energy and mining. Although

the Declaration and Plan of Action are not comprehensive from the standpoint of sustainable development, they provide a foundation on which the countries of the hemisphere can gradually build new agreements on policies covering other elements critical to an environmentally sustainable approach to economic, social, and cultural development.

Scope of this report

One year is perhaps a very short period of time to evaluate the achievements of the Declaration and Plan of Action which the countries of the Western Hemisphere adopted at the Bolivia Summit. The mandate which the Secretary General of the Organization of American States received to present this report was based on the desire of governments to assess promptly the progress being achieved on the 65 initiatives comprising the Plan of Action, which ultimately amounts to a strategy for seeking compliance with these initiatives.

The purpose of this report is to identify the major advances made in the region in implementing the Santa Cruz agreements and to make a series of recommendations designed to promote further implementation of the approved initiatives. It is important to stress that most of the activities linked to the initiatives were begun prior to the Summit, so it is not easy to determine to what extent they have been furthered as a result of the commitments made in Bolivia. In the main, these previously initiated activities were launched as a result of the commitments made in Rio de Janeiro, as expressed in the Declaration on the Environment and Development, and Agenda 21, as well as the Climate Change and Biodiversity Conventions, the Declaration on Forests, and other multilateral agreements or national initiatives of various origins. Quite frequently, the Santa Cruz initiatives were designed to strengthen activities that were already under way.

We are therefore looking at a very wide range of programs, many of which cannot be easily linked to the Bolivia Summit, either in terms of their origin or their achievements. This report makes an evaluation of the progress noted in the fields covered by each of the Santa Cruz initiatives, but it does not pretend to be comprehensive. It attempts to highlight successful strategies of implementation, identify obstacles encountered, and suggest new policies which may help to overcome difficulties.

The report singles out those activities that have been developed as a specific response to the mandates emanating from the Summit. While the number of such activities is relatively modest, they have a great deal of support, are very dynamic, and the outlook for them is promising.

Principal obstacles to implementation of the Summit initiatives

The modest progress made on actions undertaken as a direct result of the Summit can be attributed in part to the limitations inherent in the initiatives themselves, some of which go back to the preparatory process for the Summit.

Because of major disagreements that occurred in the course of the negotiations with regard to the scope of the Plan of Action and the responsibility that the different countries of the region should assume to implement the Plan, there was a great disparity in the support for the initiatives included in it.

Furthermore, while many initiatives were the result of careful processes of technical preparation that included early political consultations, others were added during the very last part of the negotiations leading up to the Summit. Background studies were not conducted in issue areas such as sustainable cities, for example, and specific lines of action and implementation methods were not spelled out. The need to include such details was understood, but the time needed to further define the initiatives and make them operational was lacking. There was also a tendency in the final negotiating process to eliminate detail from some initiatives which had been more extensively crafted, in order to obtain a degree of homogeneity in the final document. Much useful detail about responsibilities for implementation was thereby deleted, most notably in the case of the chapter on water resources and coastal areas.

The shortage of financial resources to implement the initiatives has been another limiting factor. During the Bolivia Summit, there were major disagreements on this subject, similar to the differences of opinion encountered in other negotiating forums that took place after the Rio Conference. These differences have not been resolved and have ultimately made it impossible, so far, to implement some initiatives.

The fact of the matter is that there are too many initiatives in the Plan of Action and there has been too little money available in the short term to expect major advances. A major task for governments is to prioritize the initiatives and focus limited resources wisely. This is especially true at the inter-American level, where funds to support collective actions of the member states are extremely limited.

Many of the obstacles encountered in efforts to develop the agreements of the Rio Summit were repeated in the efforts to implement the Bolivia agreements. During the Special United Nations Assembly (Rio +5), the limited success achieved since Rio was acknowledged, but different interpretations of some of the fundamental agreements made at the Earth Summit made it impossible to develop strategies to overcome implementation problems. This situation, while worrisome in and of itself, should encourage the countries of the hemisphere to rise to the challenge and find ways to resolve this situation at a regional level.

Another obstacle to implementing the Bolivia Plan of Action is found at the national level. During the process of negotiating the initiatives, the institutions which had jurisdiction over the relevant areas in many cases did not participate adequately in the process, with the result that they were not fully committed to implementing the initiatives in question. This is a situation that can be resolved, but to do so will require decisive action at high levels of government. In the case of hemispheric actions mandated by the Summit, one proven strategy is to create focal points in countries and make sure that there is a clear assignment of responsibilities. Further substantive dialogue that fully involves all of the relevant institutions is clearly needed.

A Forum of the Americas on Sustainable Development

Background

The most meaningful follow-up to the consensus achieved at the Summit is not a report, on developments relating to those initiatives, or a series of such reports, but rather a continuing and constructive dialogue that will intensify efforts to fulfill the commitments that have been made.

The Plan of Action of the Summit on Sustainable Development is in many ways a piece of unfinished business. An organized forum process is greatly needed to further define priorities and to design practical, implementable actions. New initiatives may also be identified and new topics, not contemplated in the original Plan, may be incorporated. There needs to be a space in which the highest authorities of the hemisphere governments can exchange experiences on making the critical economic and social sectors environmentally sustainable. Such dialogue can serve as a basis for defining public policies at the national level and putting the concept of sustainable development into operation. To properly meet those needs, it is proposed that a ministerial-level forum on sustainable development be established within the framework of Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), as part of the agenda of its annual meetings.

Functions

The Forum of the Americas on Sustainable Development would perform the following functions:

- a) Work towards ensuring that the contents of the Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra are reflected in regional, subregional, and national policies on sustainable development;
- b) Promote implementation of the initiatives contained in the Plan of Action by defining goals, means of achieving them, and the agencies responsible for execution, and identifying new initiatives when necessary;
- c) Promote a structured regional dialogue on experiences with solving problems of environment and sustainable development shared by the countries, as a strategy for increasing governments' capacity to define and implement relevant policies.
- d) Adopt hemispheric positions for the negotiations taking place at the international level on environment and sustainable development issues.

The Agenda for the Next Three Years

In view of the breadth of these functions, it is proposed that the Forum of the Americas on Sustainable Development concentrate each year on just two of the topics in the Bolivia Plan of Action. In particular, the following agenda is recommended for the next few years:

- 1999: Health and water
- 2000: Cities and energy
- 2001: Agriculture and biodiversity

One of the basic criteria for the selection of the two topics to be addressed simultaneously in any given year is that they should be closely interrelated and that the dialogue between the two sectors or issue areas could lead to the formulation of intersectoral policies. The two topics proposed for the first year, health and water, are good illustrations of the process. Many of the health problems in the region are associated with the lack of potable water and the unsatisfactory disposal of domestic and industrial wastewater. Such situations call for designing and putting into effect comprehensive policies and for coordinating the various sectors involved.

An agenda so conceived reduces the scope of debate to something manageable, while maintaining an integrated focus. The ministers of the relevant sectors would be asked to address the agenda along with the ministers of environment, economy, or planning, as appropriate. The focus should be on intersectoral

issues in particular and the conclusions of the meeting could focus on actions to promote more effective coordination between sectors in order to help achieve sustainable development.

Furthermore, concentrating dialogue on issues at the interface between two sectors would have the effect of engaging higher authorities of government, which are needed to address problems or conflicts that cannot be resolved within the individual sectors. Such meetings are likely to promote the kind of high-level CIDI meetings which governments mandated in the OAS Charter. Through this mechanism, complex issues of sustainability could be addressed in a practical framework which does not attempt to treat the whole massive subject of sustainable development at one time.

Besides dealing with intersectoral topics, the agendas should also focus on specific issues that will advance the process of implementing initiatives agreed at the Bolivia Summit, particularly ones requiring collective actions by governments.

Broad policy issues related to the Santa Cruz de la Sierra Declaration could also be included, with a view to furthering dialogue and action on a regional level and building hemispheric positions that could be advanced in global negotiations.

Ultimately, the ministerial meetings should be responsible for determining specific lines of action and should specify the relevant objectives, activities, expected results, financial resources, and the national and international institutions responsible for implementation.

It should be stressed that not all the possible elements of the topics to be considered in any given year would be included—only those in which there is a clear possibility of establishing a fruitful exchange of experiences aimed at policy recommendations or of deciding to implement specific proposals for action or of arriving at hemisphere-wide positions for use in negotiations at the world level. In each case, one of the priority criteria for the inclusion of a topic would be that its environmental and development dimensions could be treated in an integrated manner.

Composition of the Forum, Convening Entities and Methods of Work

The Forum of the Americas on Sustainable Development, which would function within CIDI, could work as follows:

- It would operate through annual ministerial meetings, that would deal with an agenda set by CIDI at its regular meetings.
- Its participants would be ministers or leading officials of the sectors defined in the Bolivia Plan of Action along with the ministers of economy, national planning, and environment, or their national equivalents. Given the cross-sectoral nature of the Forum, the OAS would invite other organizations concerned with the topics, such as the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), or the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE), to participate in the meetings and assist in their planning and follow-up.
- During the twelve months prior to the annual ministerial meetings of CIDI on sustainable development, preparatory activities would be carried out at an adequate political and technical level to obtain needed consensus and to ensure that the lines of action submitted to the ministers for consideration would be viable if adopted. These preparatory activities

would be undertaken in accordance with the nature of the topics to be discussed. They would include the preparation of studies and reports and the organization of workshops, seminars, or negotiating forums, among other things. The end product of these activities would be political and technical documents, which would contain specific recommendations for consideration and possible adoption by the ministerial meeting held under the auspices of CIDI.

- Efforts would be made to assure that the Forum of the Americas on Sustainable Development would be fully coordinated with the Forum of Latin American Ministers of Environment, so that their activities would be mutually complementary and not duplicative. As is well known, this strong forum has a remarkable history of achievement and concentrates primarily on topics that are the concern of the ministers of environment.

The CIDI Forum, as mandated, should concentrate on intersectoral aspects of sustainable development. Efforts should also be made to coordinate the activities of the Forum on Sustainable Development with those of the FAO Forestry Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and with the Central American Commission on Sustainable Development.

- The OAS Secretariat should also seek to utilize the inter-American technical dialogues operating under its auspices, such as the Inter-American Dialogue on Water Management and the one that is being created in the field of biodiversity, to support to the Forum of the Americas on Sustainable Development.

Technical Secretariat

The technical secretariat for the ministerial meetings and other technical dialogues would be under the responsibility of the OAS, in collaboration with other international and regional organizations as mentioned previously. Within the OAS, the Unit on Sustainable Development and Environment would function as the technical secretariat for the meetings, in association with other units as needed, under the overall coordination of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development. Specialized Organizations of the inter-American system, such as PAHO and IICA, would be called upon to provide support to relevant sectoral dialogues.





II. Progress on Bolivia Summit initiative areas

- [1. Health and education](#)
 - [2. Sustainable agriculture and forests](#)
 - [3. Sustainable cities and communities](#)
 - [4. Water resources and coastal areas](#)
 - [5. Energy and minerals](#)
-

This chapter summarizes progress made since the Santa Cruz meeting to implement the 65 initiatives adopted in Chapter II of the Plan of Action. The information for this report was provided by some countries and by several international organizations that have also made valuable inputs to the follow-up task. The agencies' contribution is an expression of the active role they have played and in some cases reflects their efforts within the Interagency Task Force to Support the Bolivia Summit Follow-Up, which is coordinated by the OAS Secretariat. The scope of this group, made up of a number of institutions in the United Nations and inter-American systems, has been expanded to include supporting the implementation of the relevant sections of the Miami Summit Action Plan.

1. Health and education

There are still serious health problems in the Americas. Infant-mortality rates average 43 per thousand in Latin America and the Caribbean and reach as high as 70 per thousand in the poorest countries. Communicable diseases are still the main cause of morbidity and mortality in the region. Last year witnessed the first large outbreak of measles in a decade. The Americas must face additional challenges resulting from new and resurgent infectious diseases such as AIDS and cholera, increasing violence, and environmental hazards. Latin America and the Caribbean also face significant challenges in the area of education, which must play a key role in creating the social awareness needed for making commitments to sustainable development. The Bolivia Summit initiatives on health and education refer to environmental health (initiatives 1, 3, and 4), emerging and infectious/contagious diseases (initiatives 2 and 6), and education for sustainable development (initiative 5).

a. Environmental Health

Several actions have taken place that should increase access to safe drinking water:

- Baseline data on access to water disinfection levels and water quality have been established as part of PAHO's mid-decade evaluation. A regional meeting on drinking water quality was held in Peru in 1996.

- Projects on cholera prevention are under way in several countries in Latin America, which promote social mobilization of communities and development of basic technologies and small enterprises for the improvement of sanitation. A project for the improvement of basic sanitation in indigenous populations has been developed to address the problems of water supply.
- An Inter-American Water Day has been established by PAHO, the Inter-American Association of Sanitary Engineering (AIDIS), and the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA). Water Day provides an opportunity for policy makers and communities to discuss their problems, educate the population about issues of water supply and water quality, and strengthen their involvement in these matters.
- A working group on coordination of technical cooperation for improving access to and the quality of potable water has recently been formed under the Inter-Agency Task Force for Bolivia Summit Follow-Up. The group consists of PAHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the OAS, the IDB, the National Sanitation Foundation, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The purpose of the group is to prepare a plan of action for addressing crucial water quality issues and to design a conference.
- The Ministry of Public Health of El Salvador is preparing new rules and regulations on industrial and solid waste and on water and air quality. In coordination with several universities and with the support of PAHO a research project covering the whole country has been undertaken to determine levels of water, air, and soil contamination.

Efforts are underway to improve child health that will contribute in reducing the effects of environmental problems on the health of children:

- The countries of the region and PAHO have advanced during 1997 in developing a common framework, the Care of the Sick Child Strategy. This strategy would support the integral development of the child, with a focus on health promotion and prevention of illness in the growth and development process.
- Regional model standards on child health are being established and will be tested in Brazil to ascertain their applicability and the difficulties of implementing them before they are extended to other countries.
- In several countries laws are being revised on infants, and children's rights, the extension of access to and coverage of health and nutrition services, and educational opportunities.
- Immunization rates have risen as a consequence of policy decisions regarding extension of coverage. Children have been protected from environmentally borne diseases, including neonatal tetanus.
- Regional meetings to encourage the sharing of strategies on health promotion have been held. This practice will be brought into schools through the initiative "Health-Promoting Schools." Several countries are undertaking mass-media campaigns for health promotion

and protection, including education on the abuse of alcohol, drugs and tobacco. All the countries of the region have developed programs for the integral development of adolescents.

The governments are also seeking to improve the coverage and quality of the available health services. They are giving priority to preventive and educational aspects and offering access to family planning information and services. The following actions have taken place in pursuit of these objectives:

- Many countries are using the themes of healthy cities, municipalities, islands, etc., to improve health promotion. Several countries are developing a basic package of health care that is to be guaranteed to all citizens. The Government of Venezuela has assigned priority to a program, based on equity and universal participation, to provide medications to outpatients. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups and especially to children, the elderly, and pregnant women. Nicaragua has also devised a package of basic services to the more vulnerable groups focused on preventive health to reduce infant mortality. Women and children are the priority targets of public health programs in the country. USAID supports programs in eight "child survival emphasis" countries in Latin America and the Caribbean: Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti.
- Both non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and women's groups have been active in the implementation of national policies, especially in the delivery of reproductive health services and pre- and post-natal care.
- Close coordination among donors and other international agencies has resulted in greater and more efficient activities within the countries and closer attention to priorities of each country's plans of action.
- Efforts are under way to make a reality of the delivery of integrated reproductive health services. These include, at a minimum, family planning, safe motherhood, and prevention of HIV/AIDS and cancer of the cervix, as well as sexual education and the prevention of violence.
- PAHO is supporting the countries in building their capabilities to analyze and formulate health policies and plans, strengthening cooperation between them, and promoting exchanges among institutions and groups. PAHO has issued a document that sets out the parameters for reforming the health sector, in which emphasis is placed on the attainment of universal coverage with equity.

b. Emerging and Infectious/Contagious Diseases

Key elements in addressing this topic have been as follows:

- The current PAHO Regional Plan of Action is an important instrument that provides guidance to countries in the prevention and control of emerging and reemerging diseases. A task force, convened in 1996, issued guidelines for its implementation and detailed recommendations on actions to be taken by countries and by PAHO. Implementation of it is in its early stages. A surveillance system for a limited number of diseases and syndromes was implemented on a pilot basis in 1997.

- A survey of national capabilities for the surveillance of emerging and reemerging infectious diseases in Latin America and the Caribbean was carried out. The results will serve as the basis for setting priorities for technical cooperation.
- A hemispheric plan to combat dengue was prepared by a task-force that met in Caracas in April 1997. However, its high cost makes its implementation difficult.
- Regarding response to disease outbreaks and disaster planning, preparedness, and mitigation, all the countries have continued to review their national and health sector plans in these areas
- In the Caribbean, response mechanisms have been strengthened by means of improved coordination between the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and PAHO. The regional Safety System of the Caribbean and CARICOM collaborate in training programs for health administration in case of disaster. The multidisciplinary yearly exercise "Trade Winds in the Caribbean" provides each host country with an opportunity to test its plan for disaster preparedness.
- A symposium on emergency preparedness in the event of chemical disasters was held in Mexico in 1996. In September 1997, Peru organized a training course for the management of epidemic emergencies caused by "El Niño." All the Andean countries, several specialized agencies of the United Nations, and the Hipólito Unanue Accord participated in this course. A similar course is being organized for Central America, with PAHO support. These efforts are complemented by OAS, IDB, and World Bank support to member states to assess the vulnerability of economic and social infrastructure and define mitigation strategies. Several regional, subregional, and national organizations have joined in a partnership to develop a documentation center on disasters. The objective is to reduce vulnerability by facilitating access to and the dissemination of technical and scientific information.
- The International Committee of Experts in Hospital Mitigation, established as a follow-up to the International Conference on Mitigation of Disasters, is advising on the definition of technical policies for the implementation of mitigation programs. The European Union has supported studies in this field in several countries. Also, a series of technical training modules directed to professionals in structural engineering and design of hospitals have been prepared jointly with the UN Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.
- Also in relation to disasters, PAHO has prepared a guide on the vulnerability of water systems. In addition, technical documents were prepared based on case studies of damage caused by earthquakes in the urban water-supply systems in Costa Rica and Ecuador, by the volcanic eruption in Montserrat, and by landslides and floods in Brazil, among others.

c. Education for Sustainable Development

Changes in educational and communications policy include instruction in sustainable development tailored to the different needs and realities of the hemisphere. Progress in this endeavor has been as follows:

- Several countries have developed multi-sectoral action plans for health promotion efforts. As a follow-up to international accords such as the World Summit for Children, the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth International Conference on Women, and the World Summit for Social Development, the involvement of different groups of civil society has also been promoted.
- In Peru, innovative initiatives in education are being promoted. The government's goal is to further diversify educational options and to raise its quality in public schools. A project on Andean ecological and environmental education is being developed at several teacher-training establishments.
- Initiatives for improving living conditions of indigenous people have stimulated studies and training within the health sector in many countries. There is increased awareness of the need to develop alternative models of communication and service delivery to reach diverse communities. The media are being more widely used for effective transmission of information in response to the identified needs of the population.
- Training models have been developed for quality of care, preparation of human resources, adolescent health, and other matters, which are based on an initial assessment and knowledge of what target populations see as their needs.
- The search for sustainable development in most countries has led to partnerships with NGOs and the private sector and to a redefinition of the role of ministries of health. These new partnerships have often resulted in greater efficiency and increased awareness of accountability.
- In Nicaragua, for instance, a National Committee for Environmental Education was established in 1994 with the participation of the ministries of education and health, other government agencies, and representatives of civil society. The Committee is an interdisciplinary institution that analyzes, prepares, proposes, and implements national policies in the areas of environmental protection and health. Several activities are currently under way on the matter of environmental education.
- The Ministry of Education in El Salvador is promoting policies directed toward transforming education at all levels of schooling. One subject in the curriculum deals with science, health, and the environment. Special attention has been given to groups such as women, youth, and children, with the objective of ensuring adequate training in sustainable development. An effort has been made to achieve equitable access to education, and support has been given to other innovative ways to improve the quality of education.
- USAID and PAHO resources will support a project on "Equitable Access to Basic Health Services." This five year project (1997-2002) will foster regional or inter-country activities aimed at developing tools, providing support, and to designing, implementing and monitoring reform processes. The Central American Institute for Administration and Supervision of Education (ICASE) will develop a master's degree program in environmental education, under a project on Environmental Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, recently approved by OAS. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and

Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the OAS will assist in the training of teachers on the topic of sustainable development. An international register of innovative practices to promote education, public awareness, and information on sustainable development will also be developed through the Internet.

d. Obstacles

Many countries share the difficulties encountered by Nicaragua in assessing its health sector: the need to clarify the functions of different actors involved in regulation, financing, and the provision of services. There are challenges posed by a lack of medical and non-medical supplies, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient and poorly kept equipment. There is unmet demand in some services and the capacity for providing hospital care is saturated. Furthermore, in most countries access to services by underprivileged groups, such as indigenous and rural populations, is very limited.

The outbreak of measles in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1997 is threatening the successful eradication of the disease, after remarkable progress had been made. Recent evaluations have identified the major weaknesses of measles surveillance systems in the region. Some of these, which need to be overcome, are common to several places.

Education is inadequately funded, particularly during the first years, in public schools serving low-income groups. Improved access to quality education should contribute to strengthening the commitment to sustainable development. Awareness of the harm being done by polluting habits is not widespread and educational efforts to develop alternative behavior are inadequate.

e. Recommendations

Additional human and financial resources should be channeled to some key sectors that need to be strengthened, such as public education for low-income groups, and to improvements in the measles and other surveillance systems. A commitment should be made to bring health and educational services to the underprivileged.

The working group of the Interagency Task Force to support the Bolivia Summit Follow-Up in charge of preparing an action plan that will address major issues of water quality deserves full support. This initiative will bring together governments and relevant agencies in 1998 to adopt an action plan, that will integrate various health-related program components and develop specific projects.

A major problem for the hemisphere is the reduction of exposure to environmental pollution from hazardous wastes and the increased use of toxic chemicals. The decision to establish regional and subregional centers for training and technology transfer on the management of hazardous wastes should contribute to progress in this matter.

2. Sustainable agriculture and forests

The rural sector, traditionally the largest employer in Latin America and the Caribbean, suffers from widespread poverty. A lack of adequate techniques and know-how among farmers and their need to capture short-term economic benefits induce practices that cause soil erosion, desertification, and other harmful effects to the environment. As is currently practiced in many parts of the hemisphere, agriculture is not sustainable. Santa Cruz addressed this as one of the most serious problems of the region.

The Western Hemisphere has the largest forest cover on the planet, comprising boreal, temperate, and tropical forests. They contain the major share of the world's biodiversity, which is primarily concentrated in the tropical regions of the Americas. This great wealth, however, is threatened by acute deforestation, mainly in the tropics, and forest degradation, which is occurring in many parts of the hemisphere. The Bolivia Plan of Action mandated a series of activities to move toward the sustainable use and management of biodiversity. The initiatives constitute a regional effort aimed at achieving the objectives established in the Convention on Biological Diversity signed in Rio de Janeiro. The Bolivia agreements were also directed at strengthening the measures adopted at the Second Conference of the Parties, which was held in Buenos Aires in late 1996. The Plan of Action includes initiatives on sustainable agriculture (7 to 16), sustainable forestry (17 to 22), and biodiversity conservation (23 to 31).

a. Sustainable Agriculture

Progress in the area of sustainable agriculture has been as follows:

- Three principal land-management issues addressed at the Summit were the use of agricultural chemicals, soil conservation and desertification, and the preservation of traditional practices. Improved management of agricultural chemicals at the global, regional, national, and local levels was a goal. Globally, an International Instrument for Dangerous Substances and Pesticides in International Commerce is nearing agreement. Subregional groupings that include North America, Central America, MERCOSUR, and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) are also close to agreements on farm chemicals. Uruguay, Costa Rica, and Ecuador made striking advances in reducing the intensity of use of agricultural chemicals, while other countries conducted campaigns against specific troublesome pests and diseases. To reduce the need for farm chemicals, the Caribbean and Central American countries introduced integrated pest control and biological substitutes for pesticides, or instituted organic farming
- Programs to achieve soil conservation and restoration and reduce desertification involve 20 governments, often cooperating closely with NGOs. Fourteen countries participate in the Network of International Cooperation on Arid and Semiarid Zones. Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru participate in the Action Program for the Sustainable Development of the American Puna. These programs also have important implications for agrarian reform and social welfare. Other countries have established specialized agencies such as Drought Commissions or National Commissions for Arid Lands. Argentina instituted a national diagnosis of soil degradation and operates several projects of soil and desertification management to achieve sustainable use of soils in arid, semiarid, and subhumid zones. Venezuela has instituted a program to stabilize river banks with bamboo plantations.
- Traditional practices that can have a beneficial impact on biodiversity include the use of organic fertilizers, mulch, and animal traction. Other practices include no-plow farming, integrated control of pests and diseases, the cultivation of native foods that favor conservation of biodiversity, and the application of sustainable management methods by small-holder producers of flora and fauna that have commercial potential.
- In keeping with the Summit directive to strengthen the efforts at the conservation of genetic resources and to generate appropriate research to support "whole system" (i.e.,

ecosystem, whole farm, or watershed) approaches, Mexico instituted a program of Productive Diversification and Wildlife in the Rural Sector offering new opportunities for economic development through diversification of crop and animal production with a base in the conservation of germ plasm. The program uses wild flora and fauna for the national chemical-pharmaceutical-cosmetic industry. Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela are stimulating research on national genetic resources. The English-speaking Caribbean is working on genetic improvement of table grapes, citrus, and native palm. At the hemispheric and subregional levels, IICA, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Tropical Agronomic Research and Teaching Center (CATIE), and other international organizations are supporting research on genetic resources of native plants and animals.

- Significant steps have been taken to connect agricultural research more closely with ecosystem conservation. Canada is investigating new strains of crops and trees that promote biodiversity and yet bring benefits such as disease resistance, more efficient use of nutrients, and sequestration of CO₂. In keeping with the call to develop "whole system" approaches, there is increasing research on timing and methods of planting, fertilizing, rotations, green manure, and organic correctives in crops, pastures, and trees. Seed banks of forest species have been established as a source of quality seeds to preserve forest masses. A hemispheric research network for coconut production was established in which 12 countries participate.
- One approach to expanding agricultural exports is support for production by crop and by region. There is support for the commercialization of Andean products and for increasing the area planted to them; increasing Caribbean agricultural exports, improving the production and productivity of traditional crops, and capitalizing on comparative advantage, and for individual products such as fruits, peppers, tubers, sea-isle cotton, and small ruminants.
- Improved technologies and services such as information systems, quarantine periods for plants and animals, techniques that guarantee sustainable use of agricultural resources, and pre- and post-harvest improvements are being applied to enhance the quality of delivered products. Central America, with the technical support of IICA, has established agricultural exchange centers with electronic information systems that bring training, extension, and support for commercialization closer to the farmer. The new technologies demonstrate a consciousness of environmental issues: Argentina has promoted crops having environmental benefits, and the Caribbean has supported cleaner agroindustrial processes.
- Some countries have helped rural communities and indigenous people by promoting foreign markets for their crops, setting up export mechanisms, sheltering them from unfair competition, instituting land reform, and establishing incentives and subsidies. IICA, FAO, the United States, China, Germany, and the European Union have supported these efforts.
- An innovative approach to increasing agricultural exports was the development of ecotourism on individual farms and ranches. Paraguay has become a leader in this approach.
- In response to the need to overcome poverty in the agricultural sector, several countries have increased credit and technical support to small farmers, improved peasants' access to

factors of production and packages of technology, and promoted organic farming. Some have created agricultural centers that showed small farmers how to increase long-term profits by incorporating environmental protection into their production systems. A number of governments helped their farmers with fish farming and forest crop production. Others devoted up to one percent of their GNP to agricultural research. A new concept called "activity chains" helped small farmers coordinate the steps in the agricultural process from the acquisition of inputs through land preparation, production, and transport to the marketing of selected crops.

- Meetings and training programs for indigenous people, peasants, and small businessmen on subjects like "Use of Tools Required to Operate Farm Enterprises" and "Augmenting Income and Competitiveness" are being widely offered by governments of the region. Attempts are being made to decentralize and privatize training activities. Training often focuses on business management for rural women and young entrepreneurs. Comprehensive exercises use integrated farms for training small operators. Emphasis is placed on transfer of technology with the goal of increasing productivity and competitiveness. Canada has supported programs of interchange of farmers from Latin America and the Caribbean. Twenty-four international meetings and conferences were convened on subjects related to the Santa Cruz initiatives on agriculture in 1997.
- Several countries strengthened local communities and rural organizations to promote conservation and sustainable agriculture. Bolivia established programs on equal opportunity for women and rural community development that help women assume a more active role in decision-making. To increase financial and technical assistance at the family level, Argentina is promoting the consolidation of associative groups of producers. Colombia's Rural Home Program supports low-income families in rural communities. Paraguay offers local leaders training in soil management. Peru helps small producers with fertilizer and certified seed for principal crops. Uruguay provides support for integrated pest control and crop diversification. The English-speaking Caribbean offers a similar array of support for small farmers.
- The most important feature of land reform is the distribution of land with certainty of title, but various national land-reform programs feature many other characteristics such as recognizing rights of indigenous populations, modernizing production, helping with credit, conducting rural cadastres, and inscribing rural properties in the public registry. Many countries strengthened their agrarian legal systems, passing in some cases titling or agrarian enterprise laws and enacting provisions to favor women with land rights.
- Some countries have improved the efficiency and quality of projects in their land-reform programs through decentralization. Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Saint Lucia incorporated agrarian reform into comprehensive programs of regional or rural development, poverty alleviation, or agroindustrial reform such as the replacement of sugar with other crops.

b. Sustainable Forestry

The following developments indicate progress in this subject:

- In accordance with the recommendation of the Bolivia Summit, governments in the region participated actively in the deliberations and between-meeting activities organized by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), which was co-chaired by a hemispheric country, Colombia. The parties were not able to arrive at a common position on the controversial issue of a convention on forests.
- The various activities organized between meetings included the following: the Study of International Organizations, Instruments, and Institutions in the Forestry Field, sponsored by Switzerland and Peru; the International Workshop on the Integral Application of Practices for the Sustainable Management of Forests, sponsored by Mexico, Canada, and Japan; and the Global Forum of Peoples Native to the Forests and Other Peoples Dependent on the Forests Regarding Preservation and Sustainable Management of Forests, organized by the Alliance of Peoples Native to Tropical Forests, in cooperation with the Indigenous Council of the Amazon Basin, with the sponsorship of the governments of Colombia and Denmark.
- After the Rio Conference, all the countries in the region strengthened their national forestry programs. This work gained momentum as a result of recommendations on the subject made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. National programs were formulated and related activities were developed on the basis of co-financing arrangements involving World Bank and IDB credits in some countries. Resources obtained on favorable terms from bilateral and multilateral development assistance sources were also used. The activities included a Pilot Program on the Brazilian Amazon, financed through a special fund set up by the G-7. FAO also played an important role in supporting these efforts; it organized various workshops involving subregional or national experts in Brazil, Ecuador, and the Caribbean under the Regional Forum on National Forestry Programs for Latin America and the Caribbean
- Some progress was also achieved in improving citizen participation in activities related to the sustainable management of forests. Several countries have adopted new policies and laws, and action has been taken to protect the cultural diversity of indigenous communities and their traditional know-how and skills. The Central American Council on Forests and Protected Areas has introduced various arrangements to guarantee that all relevant parties participate in decisions affecting forests. Numerous participatory projects for the sustainable management of forests have also been identified. These are promoted by national governments, by international agencies, such as the FAO Program on Forests and Local People, and by non-governmental organizations. Some countries have granted indigenous communities property rights to land that has been traditionally inhabited by their ancestors, or have adopted measures to organize the opening up of agricultural frontiers and clarify property titles for the new tracts of land. Under either plan, strategies have been designed to create conditions favoring sustainable management of wooded areas by rural property owners. The underlying assumption is that land holding and land rights play a vital role in the sustainable management of wooded areas, and that the process of regulating and legalizing these rights must be accompanied by technical assistance and credit programs. Moreover, while protected areas have increased in number and size, there is also growing recognition of the fact that to manage them adequately, the communities living there or in neighboring areas must participate in that management effort. Various participatory plans

have been developed to that end.

- A number of programs involving bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the sustainable management of forests have emerged in the region. The International Program of Model Forests, the strengthening of which was recommended by the Santa Cruz Summit, is designed to promote the sharing of local experiences, know-how, and technology, with a view to achieving sustainable development. Representatives from Argentina, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, the United States, and various regions of the host country attended the First International Forum of the Network of Model Forests, held in Mexico in 1997.
- In Central America and in the Amazon Basin, numerous cooperation programs are being developed under the auspices of the Central American Commission on Environment and Development and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, respectively.
- Countries in the region are participating actively in international efforts to define and implement criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of forests. January 1997 saw the start of the process to define criteria and indicators for the seven countries belonging to the Central American Commission on Environment and Development.
- In mid-1997, the ninth meeting of the Montreal Initiative was held. Forty-five countries, including the six in the Americas that are part of that process - Argentina, Canada, Chile, Mexico, the United States, and Uruguay - attended the meeting.
- The Tarapoto Initiative, involving the eight countries belonging to the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, recommended to the member governments that a Proposal on Criteria and Indicators for the Sustainability of the Amazon Forest be adopted. The Tarapoto Proposal involves a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach, which could give a considerable boost to national and regional efforts to develop an adequate tool for planning the sustainable development of forests.

c. Biodiversity Conservation

The following achievements can be underlined in this key area:

- Even before the Convention of Biological Diversity was signed in Rio de Janeiro, other multilateral agreements played an important role in furthering work on this matter in the hemisphere, such as: the International Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES); the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR); the Convention on the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage; the Convention on the Law of the Seas; the International Treaty on Trade in Tropical Woods (ITTA); the Program for Regional Seas of UNEP; the UNESCO Program on Man and the Biosphere; and the Amazon Treaty. More recently, the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development has also launched a number of initiatives directed towards the preservation of biodiversity.
- Implementation of the Convention on Biodiversity has not been satisfactory, although progress has been made in some specific areas. The United Nations "UNGASS" Program for the implementation of Agenda 21 stressed the fact that "there is an urgent need to ensure the preservation and sustainable development of biological diversity and the fair and equitable

distribution of the benefits derived from using the components of genetic resources."

UNGASS highlighted certain specific threats, including the destruction of habitat, overexploitation of both marine and land environments, pollution, and the inappropriate introduction of exotic plants and animals. Various ways to combat these threats were also the subject of agreements at Santa Cruz.

- Negotiations are currently under way to approve a Protocol on Biosecurity pertaining to the cross-border movement of live organisms which have been modified using modern biotechnology and could adversely affect the preservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and even human health. At the same time, progress is being made on negotiations to bring the International Initiative on Genetic Plant Resources into line with the Convention on Biological Diversity. In an effort to protect genetic resources of plants at the national, regional, and global levels, this review includes access to genetic resources and the rights of farmers. Latin American and Caribbean countries are taking an active part in both negotiations.
- Many countries in the hemisphere have adopted national biodiversity strategies, strengthened their research and development capacity in the area of biological resources, and introduced legislation on access to genetic resources. The Andean countries have enacted regional laws and are developing national legislation. Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, and Mexico are also planning to either introduce or amend legislation on this subject.
- In early 1997, UNEP began a review of existing legislation in the region, as an essential component for an exchange of information to serve as a basis for further developing the body of law on the subject, so that the many complex provisions of the Convention can be applied. There are also various studies in progress on enhancing the economic value of biodiversity, and research project on the industrial demand for genetic resources and an analysis of the European market.
- In accordance with the Biodiversity Convention, specific strategies on a global or regional level aimed at furthering scientific knowledge of the biological diversity of forests, agriculture, and seas and coastal areas either have been defined or are in the process of being worked out. The Conference of the Parties endorsed the Global Initiative on Taxonomy, and the upcoming conference is expected to adopt the measures required to put it into effect. In addition, at the third meeting of the scientific group of the Conference of the Parties, the adoption of a preliminary series of indicators for biological diversity was recommended. This is a field in which work is being done by a number of countries in the hemisphere.
- An important achievement in the Americas in recent decades has been the creation of systems of protected areas, which reflects a key strategy for ensuring the long-range preservation of biodiversity. Its significance is reflected in the fact that the diversity of ecosystems can only be guaranteed *in situ*. A more recent development has been the identification and establishment of protected cross-border areas. In recognizing the importance of the network of protected areas, the Convention on Biodiversity indicated its intention that this would be one of the mayor areas for project financing by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). The following projects are mentioned among those financed in the region: the regional Meso-American system of protected areas, buffer zones, and

biological corridors; the establishment of a global representative system of protected marine areas; action for a sustainable Amazon region; regional strategies for the preservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the Amazon; and national projects to support the establishment and development of systems of protected areas, such as Brazil's Fund for Biodiversity, conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development in the conservation areas of La Amistad and La Osa in Costa Rica, and the programs of protected areas in Mexico and Guyana.

- In addition to projects for protected areas, the GEF has also financed various national projects for the protection of biodiversity, such as the following: consolidation and implementation of the program for management of the coastal area of Patagonia to preserve its biodiversity; protection and sustainable use of the biological diversity of the big-geographical Chocó in Colombia; preservation of biodiversity in the Lake Titicaca watershed; the integrated project for the protection of biodiversity in the Sartsún-Montagua region of Guatemala. Finally, the World Bank and the IDB have co-financed various projects in Latin America and the Caribbean related to preservation of biodiversity.
- The First Latin American Congress on National Parks and Other Protected Areas, which took place in Santa Marta, Colombia, in 1997, stressed the importance of the initiatives agreed to at the Bolivia Summit and the close relationship between preservation of biodiversity and management of national parks. It also highlighted the role that the OAS should play as a forum for moving forward the various recommendations emanating from the Congress, and especially those related to biodiversity.
- Effective protection and use of the traditional know-how, innovations, and practices of indigenous peoples and other local communities, and the equitable distribution of the benefits so derived, as agreed under the Convention on Biodiversity, have been identified as priority goals for the Americas. This topic was discussed at length in the Global Workshop on Indigenous Peoples and Forests, which took place in Leticia, Colombia, in December 1996. Ways to achieve this objective have been discussed in various forums and workshops sponsored for the most part by local non-governmental organizations. Also, a Workshop on Traditional Know-How and Biological Diversity was held in Madrid last November. However, five years after the Convention was concluded, little progress has been made in this area, which is of particular relevance to the Americas, a habitat with a great diversity of indigenous peoples.
- The Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) will be launched in September 1998 in an international conference to be hosted by the Government of Brazil. To support multilateral cooperation in the development of this initiative, the OAS convened a Meeting of Experts in October 1997 and a second one in early 1998. These have been successful in bringing about a common understanding and acceptance of IABIN and in helping Brazil to plan for the 1998 meeting. At the first meeting, experts from seven countries made some recommendations to the OAS, one of which resulted in a call for IABIN focal points from all OAS members. The second meeting was expanded to include additional countries and non-governmental organizations working in Latin American and Caribbean biodiversity. It also considered how to develop better coordination with the clearinghouse mechanism of the Convention on Biodiversity. During this period of

implementation at least eight countries have committed resources and intellectual capital to IABIN as part of this organizing process.

d. Obstacles

In the field of sustainable agriculture, as in the broader subject of sustainable development, insufficient domestic and international funding, human resources, and infrastructure for research and technology transfer are a paramount problem. Changing legislation to rationalize the use of farm chemicals is a slow process. The practice of exporting to developing countries chemicals that are banned in developed countries further hinders this effort. There is not enough coordination between governments and businesses to find suitable alternatives for unwanted pesticides. Constraints on resources for facing issues related to soil conservation, desertification, and traditional practices, combined with weaknesses in national information systems and lack of attention to indicators in areas where transformation processes lead to desertification, hamper progress in these matters.

Serious weaknesses in the institutional and policy framework must be overcome to strengthen genetic resource measures for valuing the rich heritage of the Americas. Agricultural exports from Latin America and the Caribbean continue to face significant obstacles. Trade liberalization is still a work in process. Technologies that simultaneously increase profits and protect the environment are difficult to find, which makes poverty eradication an even more elusive goal. In some cases, ambiguity of legal provisions has had negative effects on land-reform programs.

The main obstacles to curbing deforestation and degradation of forests have to do with a lack of firm commitment at the appropriate political level to combat their primary national and international causes. Political determination will develop as communities are able to participate in the decision-making processes affecting the environment, an approach that has been gaining substantial ground in the Americas.

Differences between developed and developing countries in the interpretation of certain agreements contained in the Convention on Biodiversity have hindered its implementation. The fact that the United States, the primary user of biodiversity in the world, has not ratified the Convention reduces the chances that it will succeed in achieving its main objective. International financing is also far from sufficient to meet all the objectives and commitments under the Convention. The GEF and individual donor countries have provided grant resources to developing countries to implement projects involving the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity, but international financing is far from adequate to meet all the objectives and commitments under the Convention. Very little is being done to combat the underlying national and international causes of the decline in biodiversity, and this has become one of the most formidable obstacles to halting that decline.

e. Recommendations

Adoption of the FAO code on pesticides at the national and regional levels should help to improve the management of agricultural chemicals and reduce their harmful effects on the environment. With IICA support, governments should intensify their efforts to promote integrated pest-control practices and other programs that instruct farmers, producer associations, and unions in the safe use of pesticides. To increase needed research on agricultural chemicals and plant and animal health, associations between state and private organizations should be encouraged.

While national agencies in charge of research, technology transfer, and extension should be more

responsive to producers and market indicators, greater participation by the private sector in extension and technical assistance activities should also be promoted. Measures should be taken to ensure that local communities have greater participation in resource conservation decisions, including the design of initiatives to control desertification and the adoption of sustainable development practices.

Changes to existing legislation could be considered to make the land market more open. In this respect, measures should be taken to ensure clean title to small parcels.

Because of the importance of agricultural exports for many countries in the Americas and the rapid changes in world trade, the farm sector needs to be more involved in multinational trade negotiations and be better trained in negotiating skills.

The countries should be encouraged to implement the IPF proposals for action. In order to achieve this objective the Regional Forestry Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean coordinated by FAO should be strengthened. All countries of the Americas should participate actively in the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, which will be co-chaired by Colombia and Peru. The possibility of organizing a continental dialogue should be explored, with the goal of exchanging information on critical items of the agenda and identifying those on which a common position could be reached. Since the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests is expected to formulate its recommendations at the eighth meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Sustainable Development, it is advisable that an item on forests be included on the agenda for the Forum of the Americas on Sustainable Development for 1999, as a strategy in preparation for the Intergovernmental Forum, and that ways of implementing the initiatives approved in Bolivia in the context of global agreements be identified.

The OAS should be requested to coordinate regional activities in order to further the process of exchanging experience and information on the identification and creation of cross-border protected areas in the hemisphere. The OAS should also look into the possibility of including in the Inter-American Strategy on Public Participation a pilot project in the field of sustainable management of forests, which would link the agreements under the Biodiversity Convention with those adopted by the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests.

The OAS could also be requested to carry out the steps needed to initiate talks on biodiversity at the inter-American level, which are specified in initiative 29. This would constitute supportive action to initiative 31 and the creation of IABIN. The GEF should provide support to IABIN, which is a priority for the hemisphere. In addition, the efforts of the IDB to explore new alternatives for financing protection and sustainable use of biodiversity should be reinforced.

3. Sustainable cities and communities

The cities of the region are experiencing dramatic and accelerating changes. Governments are channeling more resources and increased responsibilities to sub-national jurisdictions. In turn, many regional and local governments are facilitating business and community initiatives to expand and improve services in terms of coverage, quality and efficiency. International technical assistance and lending programs are supporting these changes. The Plan of Action refers to four areas under this subject: economic development (initiatives 32 to 35), housing (initiatives 36 to 40), pollution prevention and environmental protection (initiatives 38 to 45), and sustainable transport (initiatives 43 and 46).

a. Economic Development

Cities have looked for greater coordination with national and regional governments, the private sector, and international cooperation, to face the challenges of urban unemployment:

- Some progress has been made in implementing new approaches to urban management or in applying them in an experimental way. USAID, for instance, has sponsored a number of programs and projects to foster the transition to democratic decentralization. Programs on strengthening municipal governments in Honduras and Nicaragua continued in 1997, and a new one on local communities' participation in development was launched in Guatemala. A conference on democratic decentralization was held in Guatemala City in September 1997, under the auspices of USAID and the Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus (FEMICA).
- The mayors of the Americas have met on several occasions in the last few years. These meetings have looked at issues of urban development in an integrated manner. Multilateral (OAS, IDB, World Bank) and bilateral (USAID) agencies have supported the mayors' meetings, most recently in Miami in October 1997.
- Decentralization has opened the way to multidisciplinary approaches to face the challenges of sustainable urbanization. Local authorities in Latin America and the Caribbean strive to create balanced, sustainable cities, enjoying some comparative advantages, in an environment where individual interests and collective services become compatible. Mendoza, Argentina; Curitiba and Porto Alegre, Brazil; Manizales, Colombia; and Quito, Ecuador, have been pioneers in their multidisciplinary and integrated approach to city management.
- Some progress has been made in decentralizing education and work training programs. In Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, and Peru, education programs have been successfully combined with on-the-job training. This is an area where city mayors could contribute because they are in a position to bring together knowledge of the local labor force and production potential as an input to shape educational and training programs.
- In Venezuela, support to decentralization has been given as called for in the IX National Plan and the Agenda Venezuela. A number of activities and services, such as health, education, sports, youth, and nutrition, have been transferred to state and municipal governments. The Intergovernmental Fund for Decentralization provides financial support to decentralize public administration, through the evaluation and financing of projects submitted by state and local governments.
- Lima, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Chinandega and Leon (Nicaragua), and Medellin (Colombia) have undertaken programs aimed at facilitating municipal access to capital markets. They have also implemented programs to improve the capacity of low-income groups to obtain credit for financing productive activities, through the regularization of property titles, and the improvement of urban infrastructure and housing. Both Mexico City and Medellin prepared comprehensive strategic plans in 1997, including the strengthening of their competitive position and Bogota is completing a similar plan.

- In Bolivia, Honduras, and Nicaragua, incentives have been set in place to promote the involvement of local communities and governments in the joint planning of projects of construction and maintenance of urban infrastructure. Porto Alegre, Brazil, has broken ground in achieving the participation of different sectors of society in the preparation of the capital budget for the city. Other cities following this practice are Mendoza, Argentina; La Florida, Chile; Cali, Colombia; Tijuana, Mexico; and Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela.
- Under the sponsorship of USAID a new three-year, \$3 million initiative was launched in 1997 to support job creation, labor productivity, microenterprise, and investment for the smaller economies of the Eastern Caribbean. USAID assistance, provided through the Caribbean Economic Diversification Program, in partnership with CARICOM, includes support for, among other things, microenterprises, short-term technical training for college students preparing to enter the labor force, and community-based projects for self employment opportunities.

b. Housing

Some innovative approaches have been taken to face the unsatisfied demand for housing in the hemisphere:

- Several countries and many cities have diversified the instruments and mechanisms applicable to urban land acquisition, zoning, development, and regulation. Colombia, for instance, has enacted a law authorizing cities to appropriate, as resources of the local government, part of the increases in land values caused by administrative decisions. In Mexico, plans have been adopted to redistribute profits flowing from incorporation of suburban land or adjoining rural areas into the cities among previous owners, infrastructure financing, and environmental protection areas.
- Some Central American countries have undertaken programs to facilitate access to real-estate and capital markets and housing to low-income groups. Urban development is no longer a state monopoly in Latin America and the Caribbean, as there is increased awareness and use of instruments to promote private-sector involvement. Metropolitan areas are conscious of the need for greater coordination between local and national governments in matters of planning, urban development, and environmental protection.

c. Pollution Prevention and Environmental Protection

Progress has been made in incorporating all potential actors in policies, activities, and financing of environmental protection:

- Peru is one of several countries that have enacted laws to offer economic and fiscal incentives, as well as extended terms to comply with new standards, to those who abide by existing environmental regulations. Brazil, Colombia and Mexico are in the process of establishing some incentives to induce communities, the media, and financial markets to combat industrial pollution.
- Bilateral and multilateral development agencies have recently developed new principles and operative models to control industrial pollution. These models are based on interaction between governments, producers, and consumers; between business and communities; and

between the public sector and the markets. International organizations are bringing forth new ideas regulating industrial pollution and new information on ways to reduce it.

- A substantial portion of IDB lending has been directed at urban environment and pollution control projects. In 1996, for instance, large-scale metropolitan sanitation projects in Mexico, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Guatemala made up the lion's share of the environmental portfolio of the bank. Major projects have also been financed for clean-up programs in Guanabara Bay, Bahia Todos os Santos, and Lake Managua and the Bank has supported innovative work upgrading low-income settlements in Brazil.

d. Sustainable Transport

New policies have been put into effect in this context:

- Some cities, especially in Brazil, have adopted integrated policies on land use and urban transportation aimed at reducing the high expropriation costs associated with land acquisition for building urban transportation infrastructure. Cali, Colombia, will follow a similar approach to the construction of its city metro.

e. Obstacles

Rapid urbanization poses serious challenges in terms of infrastructure and housing, common spaces and sustainable transportation, the prevention and correction of pollution the disposal of industrial waste, the promotion of pollution free consumption habits, and the management of sustainable technologies. The accelerated pace of urbanization is creating new forms of social and economic marginality that nurture crime and violence at epidemic levels. The largest urban centers are just beginning to keep track of city crime and are learning the particular forms of metropolitan violence. They are beginning to experiment with new measures capable of effectively curtailing violence.

Decentralization is a means towards an end, not an aim in itself. Most national governments still maintain the structures that were established when the state was the party responsible for urban development. Cities are not yet fully recognized as valid counterparts in national or international discussions about urban development. Many restrictive regulations and long-held traditions of centralized administration deny them the management of some issues, like school programs and professional training, which they are in a position to undertake. There are also some unwarranted limitations on the management of local finances or on association between local government and the private sector.

Municipal governments suffer from weak structural and operational frameworks. Thus, local authorities are forced to spend an inordinate amount of time and resources to establish the organizational basis needed for planning, financing, implementing, and controlling social infrastructure projects and credit programs for income-generating activities.

Access to capital markets for infrastructure and urban development is still unduly restricted, and sufficient new forms of financing for this purpose have not yet been devised. External financial resources should be used to promote domestic savings and to finance low-cost housing programs in conjunction with domestic resources. Excessive red tape and lack of popular participation in the design and implementation of housing developments hamper their success.

Cities often expand beyond their planned limits, and official and informal systems to provide water,

sewerage, waste disposal, and other common services to these areas tend to be insufficient and inefficient.

The existing fiscal and land-use policies are not conducive to facilitating adequate systems of urban transportation, nor is there a favorable environment for private participation in the transportation system. Different interest groups apply pressure to avoid updating and modernizing of urban traffic regulations.

f. Recommendations

The most promising approaches to urban environmental management are to provide financial incentives and involve communities, business, and governments in consensus building on shared goals and actions. Legislation should be reviewed to allow private-sector participation in urban investment and also to promote joint financing of municipal programs by the national government, the private sector, and local communities. Tax laws should be enacted that take into account local participation in public revenues. Institutional arrangements should also be revised to reflect increasing decentralization. Efforts should continue to include issues relating to urban areas on the agenda of international organizations and national governments.

The OAS should continue to support the efforts of the Interagency Task Force to support Bolivia Summit Follow-Up and its working groups on sustainable cities and cleaner production which aim to integrate the efforts of international agencies in addressing complex urban environmental problems. An Interagency Seminar on Sustainable Cities which took place in February 1998 under the sponsorship of the World Bank helped to identify priority areas for action.

A combination of coercive measures and incentives should be applied to reduce pollution. Emphasis should be placed on those policies and actions that are beneficial to all parties involved, and that stimulate each potential polluting agent to comply with its commitments to environmental protection.

Regarding the transportation sector, cities should involve the private sector in the construction and operation of transit systems. The issues of low-income housing and regularization of land ownership must be faced head-on by the countries with the direct and active involvement of financing institutions.

4. Water resources and coastal areas

Water resources management is at the very heart of the economic future of the hemisphere. Three of the largest river basins in the world (Amazon, Mississippi, and Plata) drain most of the land area of the Americas. South America has the largest volume of freshwater flow of any continent, and the freshwater produced in the hemisphere amounts to nearly twice the runoff of all the other continents combined. Common interest in the issues of management of the vast resources of the Caribbean Sea offers an opportunity for constructive interchange between the insular and continental states. Actions related to water resources and coastal areas are incorporated into the Plan of Action as initiatives on potable water (initiatives 1 and 47), integrated water resources management (initiatives 48 to 54), and coastal and marine resources (initiatives 55 to 58).

a. Potable Water

There has been a significant shift from past trends, with their traditional projects on sewerage, wastewater collection and disposal, and solid-waste management. Nowadays, the water projects provide

for comprehensive approaches to river-basin management and to integrated, multi-institutional environmental protection efforts. The Clean Water Program in Mexico and the Safe Water Project in Brazil, to ensure water fit for human consumption, are good examples of these new approaches. The programs include the protection of water sources, the installation and rehabilitation of equipment, and monitoring. In the Caribbean, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago are making impressive efforts in the areas of pollution control and coastal areas. Some examples of activities being implemented in the hemisphere are:

- Colombia is structuring a Clean Water Information System as a planning instrument for investment priorities. The system will facilitate coordination of actions to make water supply agencies more responsible for the conservation of watersheds.
- On the basis of a 1994 agreement, USEPA and the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development (ALIDES), are working with seven Central American countries to develop compatible systems of environmental legislation, regulations, and standards.
- Most Latin American and Caribbean countries either have upgraded or are in the process of formulating their new water laws, incorporating concepts originated in Dublin (1991) and Rio (1992) and even going beyond Agenda 21 in the identification of mechanisms for implementation.

b. Integrated Water Resources Management

Latin American and Caribbean countries are adopting integrated and comprehensive approaches to water management in river basins and coastal waters. The changes introduced in the legal framework have incorporated new concepts such as the principle that water-resources management should be decentralized, involve the participation of governments, users, and communities, and consider water as an economic asset. These trends favor the development of water markets, encourage water conservation, and promote private-sector participation. In Peru, five autonomous river basin authorities are being established in the Pacific Coast Watersheds. In Brazil, the Water Resources Management System will foster decentralization of governmental actions through the creation of river-basin committees and water agencies. The formulation of policies and legislation on integrated water-resources management and conservation has been given priority in the framework of the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development. As a follow-up to the Bolivia Summit, several meetings were held in 1997 in the framework of the Inter-American Water Resources Network (IWRN). These included a Seminar on Water Resources Management for the Caribbean, including coastal-zone management, held in Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago), a Workshop on Integrated Management of Water Resources in Meso-America, held in Panama City, and an Inter-American Meeting on Water Resources, held in Fortaleza, Brazil. A workshop was held in Panama on October 1997, to review progress on implementation of initiatives 47 to 58 of the Action Plan. A regional forum on management of water resources in the context of MERCOSUR is planned for Montevideo in 1998. IWRN, established in 1994, is an important regional effort that joins governmental, non-governmental, academic, and international organizations with research groups, industry, and the private sector to transmit and exchange information and experiences related to water resources.

- Jamaica has approved legislation to strengthen water-resources management. Since January 1, 1997, an environmental permit and licensing system has been developed to monitor and minimize the negative impact of development on the environment through an

effective process based on environmental audits and impact assessments.

- Peru is adopting innovative water legislation that supports both the private sector and decentralization. Under the new legal framework, the action of the state will be redirected from complete responsibility for water allocation and the construction and operation of water development projects to a role of mainly support and control, entrusting private users with the responsibility for managing water use.

As to public and stakeholder participation, greater access to information on projects and activities has enhanced the participation of communities in the making of decisions on water-resources management. Communities and interested groups directly affected by specific water projects have the opportunity to express their concerns, to propose alternatives, and to provide solutions for better management of water resources. Many countries have developed extensive education programs that cover a large spectrum of activities linked to the environment, not only through government institutions but also through academia, the private sector, professional societies, community associations, and NGOs. A few examples of ongoing projects in the hemisphere:

- In Brazil, the Secretariat of Water Resources is emphasizing the involvement of the communities in water resources development through a Citizens for Water Movement and the preparation and dissemination of informative publications and booklets for school children.
- Argentina is implementing a countrywide plan for educational activities for schools and user communities to make students and users aware of the importance of rationalizing water use. Peru is developing and implementing training programs for water users. A cycle of workshops on "Environment: Institutional Participation and Citizenship" is an annual event in different parts of the country.

In relation to transboundary water issues, Canada and the United States have long cooperated on such issues. Currently the protection of the Great Lakes has developed enough information to warrant a Great Lakes Information Network conference held in October 1997. Cooperation between Mexico and the United States has focused on shared water resources and the water quality in and watersheds. Ground, and surface-water conservation and management are being discussed binationally for several shared watersheds along the border, including, for example, the Upper San Pedro river basin, the Santa Cruz River, and the Rio Grande. Furthermore, through NAFTA side agreements on the environment, the United States and Mexico are working together to certify and leverage funds for a wastewater treatment facility. The 1992 Integrated Border Environment Plan is entering a second phase aimed at reducing pollution and improving understanding. Belize and Mexico are negotiating an agreement for joint monitoring of the Hondo River. The Dominican Republic and Haiti have reactivated the technical Joint Commission in charge of the development of the frontier zone, which involves the Artibonite River Basin. Colombia and Venezuela are implementing joint activities along border areas, especially in the Orinoco River. The same approach is envisaged for the Catatumbo, Carraipía-Paraguachón, Táchira, Arauca, and Meta River Basins. In the Amazon River basin, joint undertakings in the border areas are being implemented with the assistance of the OAS General Secretariat. They include the Integrated Development Program for the Peruvian-Brazilian Border Communities (Iñapari and Assis), and Land-Use Planning and Ecological-Economic Zoning between Santa Elena de Uairén-Pacaraima Border Area (Brazil-Venezuela), and the Plan for the Integrated Development of the Putumayo River Basin (Colombia-Peru). Other recent transboundary initiatives in Latin America are the following:

- A GEF-funded project for the formulation of the Strategic Action Plan of the Bermejo River Basin between Argentina and Bolivia. The OAS is the executing agency jointly with UNEP.
- A joint project between Brazil and Uruguay for the integrated management of the Cuaréim River Basin.
- Twelve projects for coordinated management and border integration in Meso-America.
- The GEF-funded Caribbean Project for Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change, executed by the OAS, which is assisting eleven Caribbean countries to cope with the adverse effects of global climate change, particularly sea-level rise in coastal areas, through vulnerability assessment, adaptation planning, and capacity building. Incentives are being developed for more efficient use of water in these areas.

Several countries, including Argentina, Brazil and Mexico have adopted the "user/polluter pays" principle to improve the allocation of water resources and the effectiveness of pollution control. A number of water supply and sanitation projects in Latin America and the Caribbean promote water conservation through tariff rationalization and the reduction of unaccounted-for water. Peru is introducing economic principles in the allocation of water resources, through a system of tradable water property rights. Two ongoing projects, the Land and Water Resource Management Project and the Water Management and Coastal Pollution Control Project, will assist in establishing water markets. Mexico has implemented an effluent-fee system taking into account the quality of the body of water as a mechanism for pollution control. The system is being tested in the Lerma-Chapala Basin.

c. Coastal and Marine Resources

- Despite the efforts of the last few years, the Caribbean countries face many challenges for managing their water resources in a socially acceptable, environmentally sustainable, and economically efficient manner. Environmental degradation is a serious threat, caused by oil activities and by the release of urban wastewater and industrial waste. There has been a great effort in recent years to overcome these conditions, and environmental institutions are generally adequate. However, they face constraints in terms of finance, management, and enforcement capability. A good example of cooperation is the current Planning for Adaptation for Climate Change project mentioned above. The recommendations of the joint IBRD/ECLAC/OAS Seminar on Integrated Water Resources Management: Institutional and Policy Reform, held from June 24 to 27 1997, in Port of Spain, Trinidad, focused on the urgency of managing water resources in an integrated manner: the need to take strategic rather than reactive action, to address freshwater marine, and coastal resources as a management continuum, and to develop strategic partnerships and networks for fostering information sharing and exchange.
- In the Caribbean, increasing emphasis has been placed on coastal-zone management by exploring the options for strengthening existing agencies and collaborating mechanisms among relevant agencies, or establishing specialized units with responsibility for coordinating coastal zone management. Donor support has been secured from the GEF, the IDB, the Caribbean Development Bank, FAO, and CIDA and from the governments of France, the Republic of China, Japan, and the United States for projects that address selected aspects of coastal-resource management.
- Jamaica has been participating in the negotiation of the Protocol on Land-Based Sources and Activities

that Pollute the Marine Environment, being developed in relation to the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (the Cartagena Convention).

- The Government of Saint Lucia signed a letter of agreement with the UNEP for an integrated coastal-zone management project for the southeast coast of the island in March 1995. The general objective of this project is to prepare an integrated management plan for the sustainable use of the resources of the southeast coast. The results of this study should allow replication in other parts of the island. The government has also recently embarked on the second phase of a coastal conservation project aimed at the development of a coastal-zone management plan for the northwest coastline of the island.

d. Obstacles

Chronic problems of water quality and quantity, human health, natural disasters, and degradation of ecosystems will persist in the future. Most of them can be alleviated through integrated water-resources management that includes integration of water sources and demands, coordination of water resources planning, decentralization of government services, stakeholder participation, and consideration of the needs of aquatic ecosystems. To cover increasing costs for the operation and maintenance of water systems, market pricing of water is a necessary but not sufficient mechanism to ensure the efficient allocation of water and improve water delivery services.

There is a need for an assessment of transboundary water resources issues in the Americas, identifying the main challenges and opportunities to improve the management of shared resources. Maximum use should be made of management mechanisms, such as international treaties, water resources authorities, commissions, or other institutional arrangements. The first stage of these assessments could be implemented in South America. In this region, just three of the international river basins (Plate, Amazon, and Orinoco) cover more than 73% of the entire area. The treaties for Amazonian Cooperation and for the Development of the Plata River Basin join 11 of the 12 South American countries and provide an adequate institutional framework.

In relation to coastal and marine resources, the Caribbean countries have identified four key areas for action: institutional coordination, water resources policies, public awareness and education, and innovative financing.

e. Recommendations

Achieving integrated water resources management calls for some general guidelines for action. It is necessary to coordinate water-resources and user-sectors planning and to integrate those resources with development planning at the regional, state and national levels. Other goals are the coordination of water resources management with environmental and land-use management, and the integration of the management of river basins with the management of estuary systems and coastal areas.

Coordination between states and countries should be promoted to formulate water-resource strategies and action programs and to consider their harmonization when appropriate for transboundary areas and regional seas.

An assessment of transboundary water resources issues in the Americas is needed. To complete the assessment maximum use should be made of mechanisms such as the IWRN, which operates under the auspices of the OAS, and the newly created Global Program of Action for Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution, under the auspices of UNEP. Once the first phase is finished, a series of international

meetings should be held to share experiences and derive lessons learned in the Americas and elsewhere. The OAS Secretariat could be the catalyst to implement these activities, with the active participation of interested countries and other international agencies.

As for coastal and marine resources, the guidelines for action should include the identification and establishment of appropriate coordination units for promoting cooperation at regional and national levels. The primary goals for regional collaboration would be to foster the development of professional networks to address the various components of water-resources management, such as watershed management and pollution control, and to share and exchange information through electronic networks.

In the Caribbean, integrated water resources management policies and strategies are needed for each island based on the principle that water-resources activities need to be self-financed and that demand management is a cost-effective policy option.

Programs to develop appropriate public awareness and education strategies on this matter should be devised and implemented. Specific actions may include pilot projects for managing watersheds, strategies for sensitizing policy makers and for promoting changes in public attitude and behavior, and the development of primary- and secondary-school curricula especially aimed at sensitizing school children.

The following seems advisable in relation to the economic valuation of water: improve the efficiency of irrigated agriculture and drinking water systems as a priority concern, improve legislation and effective regulatory systems, and develop the institutional capacity for better local response to demand.

To strengthen stakeholder involvement courses, seminars, workshops and publications must be designed and implemented to engage the active participation of the many communities living in river basins or particular ecosystems, in order to increase their awareness of environmental concerns, avoid the disruption of the ecological balance, and promote the protection of their habitats.

The importance of the IWRN should be recognized and its role as a water forum in the Americas strengthened.

The public information efforts of the World Bank, the IDB, CAF, and other international organizations should be directed towards letting the general public know, on a timely basis, about plans for projects, their social and environmental impacts, and their costs.

Internet sites should be established in the major national water management agencies and information centers to publish electronically policies, legislation, environmental impact statements, plans, project descriptions, and other information of interest to the public and the water-resource community.

5. Energy and minerals

The Western Hemisphere is the world's foremost energy consumer, owing mainly to the high per capita use in the US and Canada. Likewise the emissions of greenhouse gases from this region are the world's largest. It is expected that the rate of energy use in Latin America and the Caribbean will grow at a rate among the highest in the world over the next 15 years. Energy production and management will be major factors in the ability of the region to attract investment and expand production, as they have been in the past. During the past decade, the electricity sector of many countries has been characterized by

institutional reform that has resulted in a shift toward increased private-sector participation. During the same period the region has expanded its output of raw energy resources, as it continues to be a key supplier of fossil fuels to the world. Five Summit initiatives were directed at energy. These address the major challenges facing this sector throughout the region: recognition and support of the Hemispheric Energy Steering Committee of the Summit of the Americas, with emphasis on encouraging hemispheric, regional, and cross-border energy cooperation (initiatives 59 and 63); promotion of regulatory and institutional frameworks and technology exchange initiatives to facilitate investments in clean energy projects, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy (initiatives 60 and 62); and, increasing access to energy services for underserved areas, especially rural and indigenous communities (initiative 61).

Mineral resources - metallic, non-metallic, and coal - continue to be very important to the economic stability of several nations in the hemisphere. Mining is a source of employment and income contributing to alleviate poverty and promote regional development. At the same time, mining creates social and environmental problems. The Santa Cruz Summit addressed these issues (initiatives 63-65).

a. Regional and Cross-Border Energy Cooperation

Key advancements in the promotion of regional and cross-border energy cooperation have been as follows:

- The opportunities for energy cooperation mentioned in Santa Cruz recognize the importance of integration and cooperation if the hemisphere is to succeed in attracting energy-sector investment and expand its capacity. Cooperation among senior energy officials has improved dramatically as a result of the Miami and Santa Cruz Summits. Energy ministers from the hemisphere have gathered three times over the past three years (Washington, Santa Cruz, and Venezuela) to further the goals of the Summits and explore possible areas of cooperation. Additionally, the hemisphere's ministers of energy have authorized the establishment of the Hemispheric Energy Steering Committee and, most recently, the creation of a Energy Coordination Secretariat to facilitate improved communications among the various countries of the hemisphere.
- Electricity infrastructure integration is being assessed in several regions of the hemisphere. In South America, serious discussion and study has begun regarding the feasibility of an interconnected continent. Already, commercial and industrial demand has led to interconnections between Chile and Argentina and between Venezuela and Colombia. Planned expansion of the Guri hydroelectric facility in Southern Venezuela will permit the sale of electricity to the northern states of Brazil by means of a 1500-km interconnection. Further expansion in this regional Interconnection is expected via transmission lines between Ecuador and Colombia.
- In Central America, discussion of its regional interconnection was initiated in 1976, but recent progress on this subject makes the System of Electric Interconnection of Central America (SIEPAC) feasible by 2002. This may open opportunities for a connection that extends from Mexico to South America. A first link of the SIEPAC line will interconnect Mexico and Guatemala by 1999.
- Natural gas interconnections are proceeding and include the Bolivia-Brazil Gas Pipeline and two planned gas pipelines from Argentina to Chile. The Bolivia-Brazil line will run

from Santa Cruz to São Paulo, Curitiba, and Porto Alegre. The total investment is estimated at US\$2 billion.

- The lines from Argentina to Santiago, Chile, are under construction. One is from Mendoza, at an estimated cost of US\$600 million, and the other is from Lomo La Lata, with an estimated cost of US\$1.7 billion. Santiago is also expanding its distribution network. Additionally, three proposals, ranging in cost from US\$600 million to US\$790 million are competing to provide the copper industry in northern Chile with thermoelectricity generated from Argentine natural gas.
- The World Bank has completed studies concerning two additional natural gas lines linking various countries of the region. The first would connect reserves in Trinidad and the Eastern Caribbean islands to Florida. The second would connect Eastern Venezuela and Colombia to Central America, Mexico, and ultimately Texas.
- Increased concerns regarding global climate change have led to more hemispheric cooperation and cross-border investments in clean energy projects. Many such project have risen out of the Joint Implementation Initiative (JI), a program inspired by the 1992 UN Rio Accord. JI encourages investments in energy and land-use projects that avoid or sequester greenhouse-gas emissions. Investors from developed nations are encouraged to participate in such projects in developing countries. Of the 28 projects approved by the U.S. JI Initiative worldwide, 21 have been in Latin America and the Caribbean. Projects have been approved in Belize, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. This includes 10 renewable energy projects totaling approximately 180 MW, which could avoid up to 20 million tons of carbon-dioxide emissions over the life of these projects.
- OLADE has contributed to the process of regional energy integration through support of the projects described above, and to others including an electricity interconnection between Latin America and the Caribbean, gas interconnections between Mexico and Central America, alternatives for expanding the refineries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a study on the elimination of lead in gasoline.

b. Regulatory, Institutional, and Cooperative Initiatives for Clean Energy Projects

The following actions have been taken on regulatory and institutional reform and on technology exchange to facilitate investments in clean energy projects such as energy efficiency and renewable energy:

- Improved policy and regulatory frameworks for the development of renewable energy have been put in place in several countries, including Costa Rica, Bolivia, Peru, Guatemala, Nicaragua, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the United States. Numerous grid-tied alternative renewable energy projects have been launched in the past three years. For example wind energy projects have been completed in Costa Rica (20 MW), Argentina (6.5 MW), the United States (61 MW), Brazil (2 MW), and Mexico (1.6 MW). Additional projects are planned in Mexico (54 MW), Honduras (60 MW), Brazil (up to 320 MW), Ecuador (30 MW), Peru (10 MW), Costa Rica (47 MW), and the United States (800 MW). Geothermal power development has grown as well, with major projects under way in Mexico (adding 100 MW to the existing 800 MW), Nicaragua (70 MW), St. Vincent and the

Grenadines (20 MW), Costa Rica (24 MW), and El Salvador (upgrading 105 MW).

- Multilateral development bank financing alternatives for sustainable energy projects have expanded with the creation of the IDB's Sustainable Markets for Sustainable Energy Program (SMSE) and the World Bank's Solar Initiative (SI). The SMSE was established in 1996 to support the creation of sustainable markets for "sustainable energy" (energy-efficient systems, technologies, and practices and clean energy sources) by creating an environment in which there is sufficient full-scale financing for large numbers of energy-efficiency and clean-energy-source projects.
- The SI was established at the World Bank in 1994 to play a coordinating, strategic, and catalytic role in removing barriers that impede the introduction of renewable and other environmentally sustainable technologies in developing countries. At present it has US\$163 million in renewable energy projects in the funding pipeline for Latin America.
- Currently 17 countries in the hemisphere have active programs to promote energy conservation and the use of energy-efficient technologies. These countries are Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, the United States, and Venezuela.
- OLADE is playing an important role in supporting the creation of positive regulatory and institutional settings to reduce barriers to investments in energy efficiency and to promote projects of renewable energy and other clean-energy technologies that are economically feasible and socially desirable. It has worked on this with a number of countries, among them, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru.

c. Rural Electrification

The following advances resulting in increased access to energy services by underserved areas, especially rural and indigenous communities have occurred:

- Providing increased access to electricity services to the rural population of Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the greatest challenges facing the energy sector in this hemisphere. More than 50 million people, or 10 million households, remain without basic electric service. Significant steps have been taken over the past four years to address this challenge. Approximately half of the countries in the hemisphere have active programs of rural electrification. For example, Argentina has launched a US\$300 million program to provide universal electric coverage over the next decade. This effort relies on the active cooperation of the public and private sectors with support from the World Bank. Brazil's rural electrification initiative, PRODEAM, will invest over \$50 million to electrify community services with renewable-energy technologies in 5,000 communities by 1999. The Mexican Government has electrified approximately 34,000 rural households with solar energy over the past 6 years.

d. Mining

Some positive steps have been taken in the mining sector:

- Given the non-renewable nature of the mining sector and increasing pressures on the industry to become more environmentally friendly, the ministers of mining have initiated

discussions on a number of issues which will help quicken needed reform in this sector.

- At the Meeting of the Ministers of Mining of the Americas, held in mid-1997 in Santiago, an expert group examined the Bolivia initiatives related to the mining sector. Six working groups were subsequently appointed and they reported their findings at the September 1997 meeting of ministers in Arequipa, Peru. Regional collaboration on a wide range of issues affecting the industry continues to be active, including regular exchanges on clean technology strategies, ground-water controls through better management of tailings, environmental-hazard assessment, and developing markets for by-products.
- Common environmental standards, including incentives for restoration of mining sites and ground-water recharge zones and control of the contamination of adjacent soils and aquatic environments, is a very high priority for consideration by the ministers at their next meeting.

e. Obstacles

Latin America and the Caribbean are blessed with an abundance of natural energy resources. Petroleum, natural gas, hydro reserves, solar radiation, and other resources offer the region tremendous opportunities for generating electricity, powering vehicles, and fueling other energy services. However, the region continues to face severe energy challenges, such as urban electricity brownouts and blackouts, inadequate electricity service for the rural poor and significant environmental concerns. Addressing these and other challenges through increased hemispheric integration and cooperation, policy and regulatory reform, and the expanded use of sustainable energy technologies is part of the solution, as laid out by the Summit. Such solutions, however, face major obstacles.

Energy integration and cooperation has increased significantly since the Summit of the Americas and the Summit on Sustainable Development. However, more substantial integration is faced with the problem that the countries of the hemisphere are very unequal in per capita income and lifestyle. This means that the nature of the problem for each country varies tremendously, as does the contribution of each country to global and local environment problems. Also, there remain specific trade barriers and uneven product standards for fuels and electricity supplies that impede integration.

While there has been a trend toward increased privatization of the energy sector over the past decade, energy policy and regulations continue to vary substantially by country. In many cases, neighboring countries have opposite approaches to the sector: while one continues to operate a public monopoly over energy production and delivery, another has completely privatized the sector and open competition is the rule. Given such differences at every level of policy and regulation, integration across national borders and throughout the region is extremely difficult.

Utilization of clean and efficient energy sources is a potential solution for many problems, such as environmental degradation, long-term energy security, and stemming the tide of urbanization by improving the conditions of the rural poor. Increased use of renewable energy technologies, clean advanced fossil-fuel technologies, and energy-efficient technologies and services requires changes in policy and regulations in a way that makes such options more attractive in competition with conventional energy supplies. While these reforms are not necessarily very costly, they do require a serious commitment from senior policy-makers and face major opposition from much of the existing conventional energy industry.

The mining industry faces broad constraints in achieving sustainable development. There is a great variation in mining regulations covering claims, titling, and ownership rights and responsibilities from country to country. Salaries are low in the mining sector, and professional personnel are scarce. There are few schools offering any specialized training programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. The sector has often faced protracted court proceedings as untouched mineral deposits sometimes occur in national parks or highly productive agricultural lands, creating conflicts of interest.

Small-scale mining often occurs in communities confronting serious difficulties when they do not enjoy the economies of scale that would enable them to compete with large-scale operations of a multi-national nature.

f. Recommendations

Increasing hemispheric energy integration and enhancing the sector's sustainability are the central themes of the energy chapters of the Summit of the Americas and the Summit on Sustainable Development. Cooperation among the hemisphere's energy actors to achieve the goals of the Summit should be strengthened through the Hemispheric Energy Symposium Steering Committee and its Coordination Secretariat and OLADE.

The countries of the hemisphere should assess the potential applications of sustainable energy technologies and energy-efficiency measures in their efforts to further develop this sector while managing its impacts on environmental, social, and economic conditions. This might include policy reviews, local and global environmental impact training and assessments, and information exchange to permit greater use of these alternatives. International organizations such as OLADE, the OAS, the World Bank, and the IDB should contribute to the success of this process.

Competition for investment capital for the energy sector is now global. The regions and countries that succeed in attracting investment will be those with the most transparent, stable, and equitable market conditions. The OAS can play a role in assisting countries to reform policy by facilitating a dialogue between the investment community, policy-makers, and other experts. It is also in a position to work with the multilateral banking institutions to target financing to areas with the greatest need, as well as encouraging them to support projects that improve the sustainability of this sector.

The mining industry, governments, and the academic sector should cooperate to improve legislation, human resources, and research on innovative technology and to establish policy instruments that mitigate negative effects of emissions, effluents, solid waste, and land use derived from the production, transformation, transport, and use of metals and minerals, giving particular attention to tailing piles, acid runoff, groundwater controls, and the marketing of byproducts.

The OAS could assist governments in holding a meeting to help design guidelines and policies for conflict resolution. The governments should attempt to coordinate their efforts to design and implement a series of training courses with support from an appropriate source, such as the Andean Development Corporation.





III. Progress in institutional, financing, technology and cooperation aspects

[1. Institutional arrangements](#)

[2. Financing](#)

[3. Science and technology](#)

[4. Public participation](#)

Besides the 65 initiatives to be carried out by the governments in several sectors, the Bolivia Plan of Action also calls for some actions to be taken on institutional, financial and technological aspects, and on the matter of public participation, in order to create a framework that will facilitate the implementation of those initiatives.

1. Institutional arrangements

The OAS was entrusted in Santa Cruz with the responsibility of coordinating follow-up on the different initiatives of the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development. Several agencies of the United Nations and of the inter-American system were requested to collaborate in this endeavor.

a. Interagency Coordination and Collaboration

The Summit Plan of Action calls on the organs, agencies, and entities of both the United Nations system and the inter-American system "to develop adequate mechanisms to collaborate and coordinate with the OAS within their respective areas of action and mandates to support national regional, and hemispheric efforts towards sustainable development." In response to those instructions, a group of agencies of the UN system and the inter-American system, including all major development banks in the region, came together in February 1997 under the coordination of the OAS Secretariat to form an Interagency Task Force to Support Bolivia Summit Follow-Up.

The initial members of the Task Force were the OAS General Secretariat, the World Bank, the IDB, UNDP, UNEP, ECLAC, PAHO, IICA, CAF, USAID, and CIDA.

The objectives of the Task Force were defined as an interagency effort to:

- Provide a forum to discuss implementation of goals of the Summit especially where coordinated action of international agencies and financing institutions will facilitate government initiatives.
- Promote the financing of high-priority actions identified by hemispheric leaders at the

Summit on Sustainable Development.

- Organize working groups to address specific initiatives contained in the Summit Plan of Action, particularly those requiring collective action by member states which can benefit from the coordinated support of international agencies and financing institutions.
- Serve as a clearinghouse to facilitate the collection and assembly of information from agencies regarding actions taken to assist governments in the implementation of the Plan of Action.

The group selected a few priorities from the large array of Summit initiatives and created a series of practical working groups to design joint projects, produce specific joint studies, or collaborate in holding technical conferences to facilitate Summit follow-up efforts of governments and agencies alike. The principal criterion for the establishment of interagency working groups on specific subjects is that they must produce "value-added" cooperation. The product of these joint efforts has already demonstrated that it can save money and improve the quality of agency efforts to assist governments in the implementation of Summit initiatives. The work of the task force has recently been expanded to include supporting the implementation of initiatives from the relevant section of the Miami Summit Plan of Action as well as the Bolivia Summit. The present report on Summit implementation has been made possible in large part by the contribution of the agencies that make up the task force.

b. Environmental Law Network

The Plan of Action calls for the creation of a hemispheric network of officials and experts in environmental law, enforcement, and compliance to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences. The network is also to be a focal point for carrying out efforts to strengthen laws, regulations, and their implementation and also to provide training in these areas. In calling for the establishment of the network, the countries said that the effort would be made in coordination with the OAS.

- The OAS has taken a leadership role in this initiative. In the Interagency Task Force on Bolivia Summit Follow-Up it chairs a working group on environmental law that includes the UNDP, UNEP, USAID, and the USEPA. Funding has been included in the OAS budget to prepare an initial technical meeting to launch the network. It has also participated in informal meetings with agencies based in Washington, D.C., to explore possible contributions of various organizations to the development of the network.
- The OAS-funded activities constitute a crucial minimum effort to establish this initiative but are not sufficient to guarantee its success. Other supporters of the initiative should be encouraged to finance additional activities during 1998, including meetings of network participants to share knowledge and experiences, and for training purposes.

2. Financing

The Plan of Action calls for the mobilization of financial resources in keeping with the commitments made at the Rio Summit. It also states that those resources should be complemented with innovative financing mechanisms and highlights the importance of international organizations and financial institutions in supporting the efforts of the hemisphere.

- The OAS was called upon at Santa Cruz to assist in the identification of avenues and means of strengthening public and private finance for sustainable development in the hemisphere. The IDB, UNDP, the World Bank and ECLAC were among the hemispheric and international institutions asked to help with this. A working group has been established to this effect, with the participation of OAS, the IDB, UNDP, the World Bank, ECLAC and CAF. A technical meeting on financing sustainable development will take place later in 1998.
- Efforts have been made to attract private capital to programs and projects sponsored by international organizations. The OAS Secretariat has established the Trust for the Americas, a foundation which will seek to mobilize resources from the private sector for actions related to mandates from Summit meetings. It will also work closely with foundations in the hemisphere to facilitate work that complements follow-up activities to the Summits, as outlined in CIDI's "Strategic Plan for Partnership for Development 1997-2001." The Trust will place emphasis on human resources development, information sharing, and interdisciplinary research with an inter-American focus to enhance the quality of technical cooperation.
- The IDB and 15 Latin American and Caribbean countries, led by Colombia, have joined forces to create the Regional Fund for Agriculture, which is an endowment fund for financing high-priority strategic agricultural research. The Bank is also considering the possibility of establishing a Foundation of the Americas to provide financial support to civil-society initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- In the 1990s, several major trends in finance for sustainable development can be identified in Latin America and the Caribbean. Greater interest and activity in developing innovative domestic and international financial mechanisms have led to reductions in environmentally damaging and economically distorting subsidies and the increased use of environmental charges, user fees, and, in a few cases, emissions-trading programs.
- Private flows of financial resources from abroad have expanded. Foreign private funds have become the dominant source of capital for many countries in the region. However, the net impacts of foreign private capital upon sustainable development are difficult to determine.
- Heavy debt burdens have been a major hindrance to sustainable development. Although the debt situation of middle-income countries has, on the whole, improved significantly, and many have reentered international capital markets, heavily indebted poor countries continue to face burdensome external debt service, despite a decade of international efforts. The problem has been addressed by a World Bank/IMF initiative aimed at reducing their debt burden to sustainable levels and to complete a rescheduling process within six years.

As private flows of financial resources have become the dominant source of capital for many countries in the region, policies that result in stable macroeconomic conditions, transparent and fair laws and public administration, open trade and clear investment rules, and adequate infrastructure and human resources become more relevant since these are key determinants of foreign private capital flows. Countries should channel financial flows to promote sustainable development through sound social and environmental

policies and not simply short-term, unsustainable economic growth. International financial assistance directed to sustainable development should be increased and, to be fully effective, should be used wherever appropriate, to leverage greater foreign and domestic private investment consistent with sustainable development, especially in poverty reduction.

3. Science and technology

The principal regional mechanism to address science and technology issues is the Meeting of the Ministers of Science and Technology. This forum, which last met in Cartagena in 1996, issued a Plan of Action for addressing priorities and coordinating activities and investments in science and technology cooperation. The decision to charge the Common Market of Scientific and Technological Knowledge (MERCOCYT) with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the Cartagena Plan of Action was acknowledged in the Bolivia Plan of Action. The OAS was given a specific mandate to collaborate with MERCOCYT in designing a science and technology program.

- The OAS Secretariat designed a program to address some priority issues defined in the Science Plan of Action, which includes projects in science and technology innovation indicators, food enterprise technologies in the Caribbean, the use of biotechnology in vegetable production, institution building in Central America, and technology transfer in key industry sectors.
- The first of the key-industry-sector meetings which focused on the agri-food sector, was held in Costa Rica in mid-1997 with the participation of 76 industry associations from 21 countries and representatives from four financial institutions. The OAS joined forces with GTZ, the German technical cooperation agency, to offer workshops in five countries on ISO 9000 and ISO 14000, focusing on chemical-discharge management in industrial effluents. USAID has also sponsored seminars on ISO 14000 and clean technology for the industrial-export sector in South America and for the Caribbean tourist hotel sector. In addition, the Specialized Information System on Biotechnology (SIMBIOSIS) project which received special attention in Cartagena, is providing training on biotechnology applications in seven countries to treat industrial pollutants such as those from mining.
- In October 1997 the UNDP started a preparatory assistance project for the establishment of the Network for Sustainable Development of the Americas, which will provide information and means of communication for analysis and decision-making on sustainable development issues. The preparatory project will formulate the program document supporting the establishment of the Network and create a pilot version of its design and a critical mass of core modules to test how it provides basic information and services to users. In April 1998 a program document supporting the establishment of the hemispheric network will be submitted to the Summit of the Americas in Santiago, Chile, in compliance with the mandate given UNDP in Santa Cruz.

Most of the difficulties encountered in transferring scientific and technological information relate to an increasing gap between countries which invest in innovative technologies and those which cannot adequately support research and development. Fast-paced advances in technologies such as informatics, microelectronics, biotechnology, new materials, and digital communications equipment require substantial investments in training and institutions. This technological gap has significant impacts on the

well-being of the nations concerned since, in large part, it determines the differences in productivity, which, in turn, affect income levels and distribution within and between countries.

Strong support should continue to be given to the work of MERCOCYT as a means of responding to both the Cartagena and the Bolivia Action Plans. Developing a regional innovation system to raise the level of cooperation on science and technology, establish common policies on generating, transferring, and accessing new technologies, and support subregional efforts such as the Scientific and Technological Commission for Central America and Panama (CTAP) deserves priority.

4. Public participation

Governments of the hemisphere, through recent global and regional summits, have recognized that strong civil-society engagement in decision-making is fundamental for enhancing democracy, promoting sustainable development, achieving economic integration and free trade, improving the lives of all people, and conserving the natural environment for future generations. In the area of sustainable development, the Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra specifically endorses this principle, committing its signatories to supporting and encouraging, as a basic requisite for sustainable development, broad participation by civil society in the making of decisions on policies and programs and their design, implementation, and evaluation.

- Important progress has been made since the Miami Summit of the Americas and the Bolivia Summit on Sustainable Development in addressing the need for public participation in decision-making and in identifying and developing the means to strengthen civil society.
- The Organization of American States, in compliance with the Bolivia Summit mandate, is currently formulating the Inter-American Strategy for Public Participation (ISP) to identify concrete mechanisms for securing transparent, accountable, and effective participation by individuals, civil society, and governments and to promote participatory decision-making in environment and sustainable development issues. This strategy is being formulated by conducting demonstration studies, analyzing relevant legal and institutional frameworks and mechanisms, sharing information and experiences, and establishing a basis for long-term financial support for public-private alliances. The ISP is a significant effort to support collective actions by OAS member states to strengthen partnerships between the public sector and civil society. The Global Environment Facility, the OAS, USAID, UNESCO, and other donors are financially supporting this effort. Several consultations and meetings have been held and technical studies are being conducted to identify lessons learned and best practices for public participation mechanisms to be recommended as the final Strategy.

In most countries of the hemisphere, civil-society participation still needs to be fully integrated into sustainable development decision-making processes, enabling citizens to participate responsibly in decisions regarding their country's and community's development path. Even where mechanisms do exist to facilitate and enable effective participation, many remain unaware of their scope and application, or lack the tools to take advantage of available processes. The failure to fully integrate stakeholder participation into environment and sustainable development policies continually deprives governments of the unique contribution and perspective of civil society and limits the full participation of citizens in determining their future. Up to now, the main obstacle to the implementation of the ISP has been

maintaining coordination and information flow between governments and civil-society organizations. The experiences of OAS implementing the ISP, could lead to broader support for civil-society participation in public issues in areas considered pertinent by the Santiago Summit.





IV. Conclusions

- [1. Rationale for a Forum of the Americas on Sustainable Development](#)
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The short time since the Bolivian Summit is enough to take meaningful account of some progress made in implementing the 65 initiatives of the Plan of Action. At the same time, some obstacles have been identified that are common to most of those initiatives, and some institutional arrangements that could facilitate progress have been devised. Previous sections of this report have summarized specific accomplishments, obstacles, and proposals for action in the five areas of the Plan of Action. A brief review has also been made of progress achieved on the recommended institutional, financial and technological actions, which were mandated to establish a favorable framework for implementation of the Plan. This chapter brings together some of the more general conclusions, which have been suggested in this report.

1. Rationale for a Forum of the Americas on Sustainable Development

The significant accomplishment of the Americas in being the first region of the world to agree on a regional agenda for sustainable development should be followed up by concrete measures designed to expedite the implementation of the initiatives and actions approved in Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

Serious differences between developed and developing countries on issues related to the concept of and the means to achieve sustainable development have not been resolved. The mutually agreed upon initiatives for action also in many cases need to be more precisely defined. They require additional refinement, including practical ways to put them into effect, before they can be implemented. Both bridging the gap and fine-tuning the initiatives can be attained through further constructive structured dialogue at the technical and political levels. Many of the initiatives involve the coordination and cooperation of two or more sectors. Cross-sectoral dialogue is greatly needed to resolve issues at the interface between sectors, with the involvement of the relevant government agencies of planning and finance.

A ministerial-level forum should be established for continuing governmental contacts towards finding

common grounds for policy and for action, and also for undertaking the necessary additional analysis and improvement of the initiatives and goals of the Plan of Action. A Forum of the Americas on Sustainable Development should be established at the ministerial level and be open to government representation in specific sectors to be considered at its meetings.

2. Institutional Framework for the Forum

The appropriate institutional place for a Forum of the Americas on Sustainable Development is the Organization of American States, the political forum of the countries of the hemisphere. The OAS was entrusted in Santa Cruz with the role of coordinating the follow-up of the various decisions of the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development. Within the OAS, the Forum should be established in the context of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) and could take place at its annual ministerial meeting. The guidelines for its functioning are presented in the Introduction to this report. As explained there, it is necessary that the proposed hemispheric forum work in close coordination with other international organizations and fore dealing with the environment and sustainable development issues at regional and subregional levels.

The Santa Cruz Plan of Action instructed the Inter-American Committee on Sustainable Development (CIDS) to review the progress of the Plan as part of its agenda. The OAS General Secretariat has been providing technical secretariat services to this Committee. The OAS should continue to support CIDS and also function as the source of technical and logistic support to the proposed Forum within CIDI.

3. Coordination of Support from International Organizations

The Interagency Task Force to Support Bolivia Summit Follow-up has made a valuable contribution to a process of selecting activities within the Plan of Action and identifying means for implementation which can attract the support of financing and technical cooperation agencies.

While governments, together with their civil societies, are primarily responsible for implementing the Plan of Action for the Sustainable Development of the Americas, the active participation of agencies of the United Nations and inter-American systems can offer substantial support to the technical, operational, and financial aspects of the Plan of Action. The work of the Interagency Task Force in this regard, with its coordinated action by specialized international and inter-American institutions, should be stimulated and maintained.

A number of bilateral and multilateral agencies have presented detailed statements of their policies and inventories of their projects in the area of sustainable development, which accompany this report. Some of those organizations, such as the IDB, USAID, and the World Bank have channeled substantial technical and financial resources to support the implementation of Summit initiatives. The appended compilation of their policies and projects will be useful to the countries as indicators of possible sources of future support. The priority assigned by the agencies to different aspects of sustainable development shows the extent to which the international community is backing the initiatives of the Santa Cruz Plan of Action.

4. Financial Resources for Sustainable Development

A lack of sufficient financial and technological resources has been identified as one of the main constraints in implementing many of the initiatives launched in Santa Cruz. Constructive dialogue is needed to explore innovative financial mechanisms that can be accepted by all parties concerned to supplement the funding available for sustainable development. Dialogue can also contribute to overcoming difficulties in transferring scientific and technological information.

The OAS has responded to the mandate received at Santa Cruz to look for new instruments and sources of financing for sustainable development, with the support of other international institutions. The working group of the Interagency Task Force established for this purpose is collaborating on plans for a technical meeting on financing sustainable development, which is expected to take place later in 1998.

The OAS has opened its doors to private capital through the establishment of a foundation that will try to mobilize resources from the private sector for financing development programs and projects. The IDB has strengthened its financial support to Latin America and the Caribbean by establishing new instruments in the fields of agriculture and energy. The Bank is also considering the creation of a foundation to support civil-society initiatives.

There is a fortunate trend in Latin America and the Caribbean towards reducing environmentally harmful subsidies and increasing the use of environmental charges and user fees. As private flows of financial resources have become the dominant source of capital for many countries of the region, policies that are key for private investment are gaining in importance.

5. Environmental law

The efforts made by the OAS to begin establishing the basis on which a network of hemispheric experts and officials on environmental law can be created should be encouraged. Institutional arrangements in the region, among them the legal framework, are critical to the success of the common effort to promote sustainable development. The environmental law network should contribute to modernize laws and regulations and to improve their enforcement.

The initial OAS technical meeting to launch the network should serve as the occasion for other international institutions to initiate their support to the development of the network.

6. Public participation

The OAS has responded promptly to the mandate it received to assist in the formulation of an inter-American strategy for the promotion of public participation in decision-making for sustainable development. Following the guidelines embodied in the Plan of Action, the strategy will promote the exchange of experiences and information among representatives of government and civil society on policies, programs, and legal and institutional mechanisms.

Civil society involvement is an essential component of sustainable development, since it amounts to

recognition that development is a task of and for the citizens. Interaction between the government and groups such as non-governmental organizations, civic associations, labor unions, and civil society in general provides a broad basis upon which sustainable development efforts can be founded. The relative scarcity of human resources can be overcome through attracting the whole community to share in the drive for development. The effort the OAS is undertaking in this context deserves full support. The cooperation that the GEF USAID, and UNESCO are providing in this effort is to be commended.





The Organization of American States

The purposes of the Organization of American States (OAS) are to strengthen the peace and security of the Hemisphere; to prevent possible causes of difficulties and to ensure the pacific settlement of disputes that may arise among the member states; to provide for common action on the part of those states in the event of aggression; to seek the solution of political, juridical, and economic problems that may arise among them; and to promote, by cooperative action, their economic, social, and cultural development.

To achieve these objectives, the OAS acts through the General Assembly; the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs; the three Councils (the Permanent Council, the Inter-American Economic and Social Council, and the Inter-American Council for Education, Science, and Culture); the Inter-American Juridical Committee; the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; the General Secretariat; the Specialized Conferences; and the Specialized Organizations.

The General Assembly holds regular sessions once a year and special sessions when circumstances warrant. The Meeting of Consultation is convened to consider urgent matters of common interest and to serve as Organ of Consultation in the application of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (known as the Rio Treaty), which is the main instrument for joint action in the event of aggression. The Permanent Council takes cognizance of matters referred to it by the General Assembly or the Meeting of Consultation and carries out the decisions of both when their implementation has not been assigned to any other body; monitors the maintenance of friendly relations among the member states and the observance of the standards governing General Secretariat operations; and, in certain instances specified in the Charter of the Organization, acts provisionally as Organ of Consultation under the Rio Treaty. The other two Councils, each of which has a Permanent Executive Committee, organize inter-American action in their areas and hold regular meetings once a year. The General Secretariat is the central, permanent organ of the OAS. The headquarters of both the Permanent Council and the General Secretariat is in Washington, D.C.

The Organization of American States is the oldest regional society of nations in the world, dating back to the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C., which on April 14, 1890, established the International Union of American Republics. When the United Nations was established, the OAS joined it as a regional organization. The Charter governing the OAS was signed in Bogota in 1948 and amended by the Protocol of Buenos Aires, which entered into force in February 1970. Today the OAS is made up of thirty-two member states.

MEMBER STATES: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, The Bahamas, (*Commonwealth of*), Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, (*Commonwealth of*), Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela.

