

**MOAS/PC
Newsletter**

The MOAS/PC is jointly organized by the Department of International Affairs and the Department of Human Resources

**The Mission of the
MOAS/PC**

- Promote democratic values among the Youth of the Hemisphere.
- Increase Awareness of the mission and work of the OAS.
- Illustrate the importance of diplomacy and negotiation.
- Make students aware of the most important issues in the Americas.
- Train committed leaders.

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MOAS/ PC NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1-2, 2011

MOAS/PC Delegates Unite to Strengthen Democracy in the Americas

OAS Interns pass resolutions to promote and strengthen democracy through greater civic participation and by the creation of a *Special Rapporteurship on Democracy*



Washington D.C. – On August 1st and 2nd of this year, 79 Interns from across the Americas and beyond (Europe, Asia and Africa) convened at the 10th Model of the Permanent Council of the OAS (MOAS-PC), to deliberate about the challenges to democratic governance in the Hemisphere and draft proposals aiming at strengthening and promoting its application in the Americas. This topic is especially relevant since 2011 marks the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter (IDC) by the Organization of American States (OAS).

“The Inter-American Democratic Charter is one of the best contributions made by this Organization to the Americas”

- Irene Klinger, Director, Dept. International Affairs

In his opening remarks, the Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, Ambassador Albert Ramdin, encouraged the delegates to have an active and profound debate on the matter: “You are young. I think

there is a specific responsibility for young people. Regretfully, many young people in our societies are becoming more materialistic and most selfish. Your presence here is relevant not only for you, but for all of our societies. You are working for something that is relevant for people in different nations. So take this responsibility seriously.”

“Most countries are persuaded that the Democratic Charter should not be amended, should not be retouched, but it should be interpreted in light of the circumstances”

- Amb. Jorge Skinner-Klee, President of the Permanent Council; Representative of Guatemala to the OAS

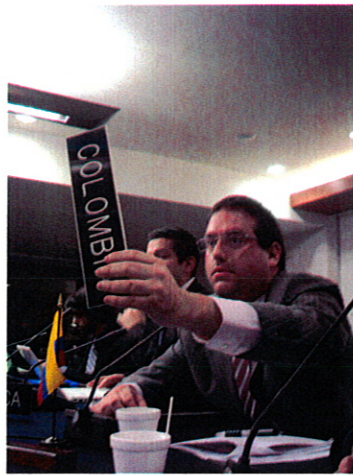




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Did you know that...

- In 2011, the total number of electoral democracies was **115** out the World's **194** countries.
- Only **65%** of the World's population lives in electoral democracies.
- Nearly **2.5 billion** people live in societies where fundamental political rights and civil liberties aren't respected.



The current Chair of the Permanent Council and Representative of Guatemala to the OAS, Ambassador Jorge Skinner-Klee stated that: "youth is an important part of democracy. Democracy should not only to be seen as the vote on the day of an election, but rather as the way power is applied." Therefore, the Ambassador asked the delegates to be flexible, but yet to produce great reflection.

"It is interesting to know how an international organization works. You also really get to see how a period or a coma in a resolution can actually influence decisions on the ground!"

- Rohan Kocharekar,
Delegate of Canada

The Director of the Department of International Affairs, Ms. Irene Klinger, spoke about

the Right to Democracy of the citizens of the Americas emphasizing it as the first and main principle of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. She also reminded the delegates that since the adoption of the IDC, in 2001, all Member State must hold a democratic government as a condition for active membership at the OAS.

In its opening speech, The President of the MOAS/PC, Adrian Calcano, reminded the delegations from the 34 active Member States that "The Americas, despite being the birthplace of modern democracy, have struggled to establish representative democracies as their predominant form of government." Therefore, he reaffirmed the importance of the Inter-American Democratic Charter as a document that reflects and institutionalizes a collective responsibility and a new era in the hemispheric commitment to democracy, that should, and must, be defended".

Following the Opening Ceremony, the MOAS Authorities officially stepped into their roles. Thus, MOAS President, Adrian Calcano along with MOAS Secretary General, Melissa Bryant brought the simulation to order, voting on the order of business

and the Modus Operandi. Each delegate then proceeded to a short presentation of their country's position regarding the topic of the Agenda: *10th Anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter: Challenges to Democratic Governance*.

"Democratic governance is not an aspiration but a right, a right that should, and must, be defended"

- Adrian Calcano
President 10th MOAS/PC

Overall, the delegations underlined the challenges and treats that democracy is facing, the first three being the low civil participation and political involvement of social society, violence and corruption, all elements leading to poverty and exclusion and perceived to be breakdowns for democracy itself.

The delegate of Brazil, Karl Garcia, underlined the importance of strengthening and promoting human rights in the Hemisphere to ensure the continuity of democracy.



Data collected from a study published by *Freedom House*, an independent watchdog organization that supports democratic change and monitors the status of freedom around the world. For more information, visit: www.freedomhouse.org



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The representative from the Commonwealth of Dominica, Jonathan Grabinsky, reminded its fellow delegates that economic matters were a priority and that “more insistent approach should be taken to target the economic development problems facing the Hemisphere”. The representative of Guyana, Shannon Snow, suggested concentrating efforts for the promotion of democracy at resolving social and gender issues. The delegate of Venezuela, Eduardo Granizo, highlighted the importance of governmental transparency for the sustainability of participative democracy.

“I realized that as an Ambassador, you have to put your personal opinions aside and represent your country. I always knew that concept but I now acknowledge and understand better what these people have to go through”

- Christian Gonzalez
Delegate of Uruguay



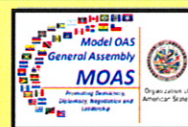
The subject being broad, the delegations quickly realized that priorities regarding democracy varied from one country to another, and that the process of negotiation would be difficult. Nonetheless, delegates finally agreed to concentrate their efforts on two specific topics,

therefore forming two Working Groups. The first group worked on *Creating an evaluation mechanism to monitor Democracy in the Hemisphere* while the second group focused their attention at *Increasing Civic Participation in the Americas*.

For many hours, delegates in each group debated, drafted and voted on resolutions to be presented in front of all the Member States, with the precious help of MOAS Rapporteurs, Valentina Socias y Marcela Rivas. Also present throughout the process were IDC specialists Karen Kozi-covich and Gustavo de Unanue, from the Department of Sus-

tainable Democracy and Special Missions of the OAS, who patiently guided the delegates through their tumultuous discussions and reminded them to be as precise and as clear as possible in their final resolution in order for it to be understood and accepted by others.

On the second day, the two resolutions were presented and voted each separately in a session of the Model Permanent Council. The first resolution, entitled *Plan of action for the Creation of a Special Rapporteurship for Democracy*, was fiercely debated. Some countries from the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) opposed to the principle of being “evaluated” on their democracies. Many delegates also criticized the cost of such a project, for which there was no mention in the resolution.



ABOUT THE MODEL OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL FOR OAS INTERNS - MOAS/PC

The Permanent Council Model for OAS Interns (MOAS/PC) is a simulation exercise of the proceedings of the [OAS Permanent Council](#). During the MOAS/PC, interns working at the headquarters of the Organization of American States in Washington D.C., engage in general debate, lobbying, caucusing and negotiation, and participate in working groups.

Each participant represents one of the [OAS Member States](#). Countries are assigned by the [Department of International Affairs \(SER/DIA\)](#) of the OAS. Interns need to prepare in anticipation to the MOAS by learning the function and proceedings of the Permanent Council, understanding the topic of the MOAS, and learning about their assigned country position on that topic. During this preliminary stage, interns have the opportunity to learn and receive orientation from OAS experts on the topic, as well as from diplomatic representatives of their assigned countries.

During the MOAS/PC interns discuss and debate the issue at hand maintaining their assigned countries' policies and interests, but at the same time, looking for hemispheric solutions and compromise. By the end of the Model, Interns have drafted resolution proposals and have approved them by consensus or majority vote. These Final Resolutions are posted on the MOAS web page and sent to the OAS authorities.





“Overall, it was a good experience, mainly because it allows us to express ourselves in a different scene. We also get the opportunity to discuss, as delegates but also as ourselves, Interns, on interesting political issues”

- Darma Romero
Delegate of Santa Lucia

In response to all these concerns, the delegate of Costa Rica, Victoria McLaughlin, explained that the resolution was not about *evaluating* democracy, “but rather, about knowing how democracy being exercised in different countries and how people are practicing it,” adding that ideally, it would provide some benchmarks on “where we *are*, and where the room for improvement *is*.” The delegate of Santa Lucia, Darma Romero, also passionately defended the project, stating that it is not possible to say that any country has a “perfect” democracy, and that “all could learn from these reports that would be produced by a *Special Rapporteurship* to have feedback on *what we can maintain* and *what we can do better*.”

Other countries such as the representative of Barbados, Miguel Gimenez explained that the *Rapporteurship* would function in the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, thus partly answering the financial concerns. In the end, the resolution passed with votes of 24 countries in favor, 6 against, and 4 abstentions.

The instigator of the resolution and Chair of the Working group on the topic, the delegate of Paraguay, Duarte Valente, admitted: “I recognize that we have had some difficult moments and that the negotiation was a tough one but I think that it was a good experience insofar as one has learned the value of compromise.”

The second resolution, *Increasing Civic Participation in the Americas to Facilitate and Strengthen Democratic Governance* passed by consensus, to the great pleasure of the Authorities and delegates of the MOAS/PC. Jonathan Grabinsky, delegate from the Commonwealth of Dominica explains the success of this resolu-

tion by the fact that: “Civic participation is something that every country, no matter what their allegiance, size or economy is in favor of, because it is the root of democracy.”

Equally satisfied was the delegate of Antigua and Barbuda, Charles Abbott, who declared: “By this resolution, we are filling in the meaning of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and reflecting the spirit of all original intent that we all had when coming here, which was to work for our fellow citizens. Therefore, this is an important step in safeguarding the elements of democracy.”

Finally, the delegate of Bolivia, Adam Frankel, insisted on the importance of these resolutions for marginalized populations, “in our case, we are talking about Indigenous populations, Afro-descendants and a number of groups that may not have the technical or physical access in monitoring and making their government accountable.” As in one point it asks for easier and more fluid access to voting.

During the Closing Session of the Model Permanent Council, the MOAS/PC President, Adrian Calcano along with the Secretary General, Melissa Bryant, gave their closing remarks. The Secretary General noted the efforts and engagement of everyone and underlined that despite animated discussions, compromise was possible.

During the Closing Ceremony Nelly Robinson, MOAS Program Coordinator, congratulated delegates for their hard work and great debate during the approval of both resolutions, adding that the exercise proved that even if countries adopt different political positions, consensus is still possible.

“It was a good experience insofar as one has learned the value of compromise”

- Duarte Valente
Delegate of Paraguay

The event was followed by the distribution of Certificates of Participation to all delegates by the staff of the Departments of International Affairs, and of Human Resources. The resolutions will be sent to the President of the Permanent Council as well as to the OAS authorities. The proposals might, therefore, somehow influence positive changes in the Hemisphere in the long term, thus, raising the voice of youth in the Americas.



“I researched heavily for the MOAS and I found that I agreed with a lot of the positions that my country took. Therefore my general impression of the MOAS is more than positive”

- Karl Garcia
Delegate of Brazil

Resolution Highlights

Resolution 1

Plan of Action for the Creation of a *Special Rapporteurship* on Democracy

Voting:

In favor: 24

Against: 6

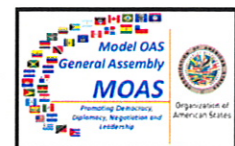
Abstentions: 4

Resolution 2

Increasing Civic Participation in the Americas to Facilitate and Strengthen Democratic Governance

Voting:

Consensus





A message from the President

"There can be no daily democracy without daily citizenship"

- Ralph Nader

The MOAS gives its participants a unique opportunity of living diplomacy and understanding the nature of its challenges. I believe that each and every one of us finished the MOAS with a clearer understanding of how international relations really work and a high regard for the strength behind consensus politics. Our topic, *10th Anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter: Challenges to Democratic Governance*, was of the utmost importance and relevance to the moment our hemisphere lives today.

Democracy does not end at elections, democracy is a process that should be promoted and protected every day before and after the election. The IDC by establishing the right of every man, woman, and children to democracy, puts the responsibility in the hands of each and every one of us in defending and, more importantly, in promoting it. The regional commitment to the charter embodied in the IDC can only survive if all of us subscribe to it. In the future, when I look back at my experience of serving as President of the MOAS/PC, I will remember the immense commitment to the region and to democratic values of all the participants.

Adrian Calcaneo

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IN MEMORIAM

We wish to address our special thoughts to two French women: Cassandre Bouvier, 29 years old (ex-participant in the MOAS, 2011, El Salvador) & Houria Moumni, 24 years old, both students at La Sorbonne, France, fascinated by Latin America, who on July 29 2011, died victims of irrational violence in Salta, Argentina.

May their souls rest in peace.



The 10th MOAS/PC in Pictures



For more information about the MOAS/PC and MOAS General

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