

THE INTERN AMERICAN





SUMMER 2015 INTERNS WITH HIS EXCELLENCY SECRETARY GENERAL LUIS ALMAGRO

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Opening Ceremony of the 22nd MOAS 1

August 4, 2015



Youth are an integral part of the OAS agenda.

This was one of the points underscored by Ambassador Nestor Mendez, Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, one of two high-ranking OAS officials addressing the Opening Ceremony of the 22nd MOAS/PC, held at the OAS General Secretariat Building. Also in attendance as a guest speaker was Ambassador Hugo Cayrus, Chair of the Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the OAS.

The topics chosen for the 22nd MOAS/PC were: “Mechanisms to diminish racism and discrimination towards Afro-Descendants and Indigenous people in the Hemisphere,” and “New approaches to address intolerance and discrimination towards LGBTI groups in the Americas.”

Speaking about this simulation exercise, Ambassador Mendez committed his office to expanding the MOAS program even while developing an Initiative called STARS (*Strategic Alliance for Research and Studies*), for identifying and mentoring marginalized youth.

He pointed to the ability of the MOAS exercises to deliver threefold benefits, namely: via its role as “a participatory mechanism for youth in the policy framework of the OAS” (for example, by giving them a voice in the political bodies such as the Permanent Council); through the inculcation of skills within youth participants (including negotiation and the development of civic mindedness); and by grooming youth leaders in OAS Member States.

Ambassador Cayrus, for his part, encouraged the 81 interns present to take the MOAS exercise seriously, noting that the only difference between themselves and the actual representatives to the Permanent Council, was what he aptly termed the “young” ideas they could bring to the table.

Offering prudent advice on the conduct of the impending exercise, he reminded the group of interns that the OAS is “the only platform available to successfully discuss any issue brought by the Members States”. Before ending his remarks, the Chair of the Permanent Council urged the intern-delegates to bring “candid and practical ideas” towards their resolutions.

The Opening Ceremony was hosted by MOAS Coordinator, Ms. Nelly Robinson.

READ OUR RESOLUTIONS!

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Two topics were deliberated at the 22nd MOAS:

1. MECHANISMS TO DIMINISH RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS AFRO-DESCENDANTS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE HEMISPHERE **and**
2. NEW APPROACHES TO ADDRESS INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS LGBTI PERSONS IN THE AMERICAS

After two days, we emerged with a nine-clause resolution in the first instance, and a ten-clause resolution in the latter. That, in itself, is an achievement, even if sheer fatigue robbed, to some extent, the potential cut-and-thrust of the debate on the LGBTI issue. The footnotes in this second resolution give a truer picture of the level of thought and preparation put into the consideration of this sensitive issue.

We urge you to read the resolutions carefully. We have done our part. You decide whether we have advanced, in a positive way, approaches and mechanisms to effectively address these issues in the Americas (for the resolutions, please visit the MOAS website, 22nd MOAS, under RESOLUTIONS).

MOAS moments

MOAS MOMENTS - On being a delegate:

There should be greater commitment and motivation to participate as an active delegation. Even if it is easier for some interns who already know MOAS or similar Models, it is fundamental for them to respect the fact that others see it as a true learning experience and one that could be very valuable for the future. They should support interns who are not familiar with the MOAS, and act as guides for them to benefit and understand the Model.

MOAS MOMENTS - On Working Groups:

The working group is the hardest part of the job. To bring together about 12 [conflicting] views or ways of seeing things was a real challenge. Any single word means a lot and you have to make sure you are clear enough to allow others to not misunderstand the thought expressed. Another great advantage: because of the different backgrounds (law, business, social sciences) of each participant, the discussions were rich and informative.

I have to say that the discussions in my working group were great and almost every person in the group greatly contributed and took into consideration what other delegates had to say.

MOAS MOMENTS - On the MOAS elected officials:

I would like to congratulate all officials of the 22nd MOAS/PC for the commitment and effort put into this experience. For their leadership provided and responsibility in guiding all delegations, and for motivating and helping them to participate in the Working Groups, Committee Sessions and Official Permanent Council Sessions.

impressions

**Most likely to become an
Ambassador:**

Ricardo Bello

Sleep-in beauty:

Gerardo Zúñiga

Freshest dresser:

Tatiele Ferreira

PERSPECTIVES

My MOAS

experience: What Happens When You Mix Stubbornness and New Things

by Fidel Márquez Barroeta

When I was probably in the third or fourth semester of my BA degree, the whole UN Models movement was kind of a big thing. Students were engaged, sometimes skipping classes to attend the workshops and training sessions. Being the rebel I was (or as much as you can be in a career like International Studies), I always considered the Models – and everything related to them - distracting and nerdy.

Because of the bureaucratic roller-coaster one goes through to get from my city, Caracas, on plane to the US, I didn't give the MOAS much thought. Fortunately, my views on the whole Models thing had somewhat softened and I thought that doing my very first internship within a multilateral organization was worth it. I saw it as a fun challenge. When I learned that I'd be representing the Dominican Republic and that the issue was diminishing racism and intolerance, I saw it as a huge challenge.

I knew I would have to do a fair amount of research. My assigned country's policy and the legal framework behind it were unpopular, to put it lightly, but I thought that could help me to have a stubborn position and shield me if things during the exercise got complicated. However, the dynamic allowed for each country to have at least one representative in each of the two committees. Javier, a law student about to get his BA degree and interning at the IACHR and my co-delegate for the Dominican Republic, was a great partner to work with. My favorite aspect of the MOAS exercise was brainstorming and debating ideas before splitting into working groups. I enjoyed the discussions because they represented an area in which I want to develop as a professional: taking ideas out of your mind and narrowing them into concrete suggestions, policies and eventually programs. Day 2 was tougher than Day 1, and that I did not expect. When the draft resolution of each working group was ready, our committee submerged into an edit-redrafting session; it is not easy (or fun) to read and revise a document along with 25 people. I was so obsessive and bossy with some of my comments that at some point, I almost accidentally referred to my delegation as that of "the Demonical Republic", hope no one heard that...

At the end of the day, what the MOAS taught me the most was perspective. Just like many interns I have talked with, it's hard to have a perspective and the resilience to uphold a position (yes, official) which, at the personal level, you don't necessarily agree with. I believe that situation will come up often during our working lives. Just like hastily packing your bags and showing up to do an internship in another country, you must have perspective to try new things. Even if they seem boring at first and you need to wear a tie.

impressions

Best Personality:

Devon Yetman

Life of the party:

Enrique Rubio

**Definitely will brighten
your day:**

Marina Loza

statements

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GENERAL STATEMENTS BY DELEGATES AT THE OPENING PLENARY SESSION OF THE 22ND MOAS, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2015.

Name: Enrique Rubio
Delegation of Uruguay
General Committee - Mechanisms to Diminish Racism and Discrimination towards Afro-descendants and Indigenous Peoples in the Hemisphere

"The Oriental Republic of Uruguay has signed and ratified all the instruments of international humanitarian law, and particularly the ones regarding racism and intolerance (...) Our country has passed legislation like Law 19,122 in 2013, regarding standards to promote the participation of the afro-descendant community in the educational and employment areas, such as affirmative action policies, or legislation that established the commemoration of both Charrúas (original indigenous population) and Afro-Uruguayan legacy in Uruguay (...). Even though there is no indigenous population in the country, we are entirely committed with measures that imply respect to the rights and memory of the legacy of these peoples of the Americas, and specifically with the descendants of the Charrúas in Uruguay. We have made progress regarding integration and the fight against the marginalization and poverty of these ethnic groups, [but] we still have a lot to do in order to achieve total equality [for all]. In this regard, the Delegation of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay would like to state that this Permanent Council should recognize the necessity of implementing affirmative action policies across the Americas regarding Afro-descendant and Indigenous peoples which must be evidenced in the streets and society, in the media and in educational institutions."

Name: Allison Esquen-Roca
Delegate of Colombia
First Committee – Juridical and Political Affairs:
“New Approaches to Address Intolerance and Discrimination towards LGBTI Groups in the Americas

"As a country, Colombia has taken many steps to become a more tolerant society. In the past two decades alone, we have managed to bring LGBT couples closer to having the same rights awarded to married heterosexual couples; we have let those LGBTI individuals who wish to serve and protect do so without the need to conceal their sexualities; and, most recently, we have allowed those who feel that they are being mis-gendered to change their legal gender without invasive psychiatric and physical evaluations. We have done a lot, but there is a rather large discrepancy between the different levels of government that keep us from advancing LGBTI rights. As it stands, a sizable gap exists between the progressive Constitutional Court and the largely conservative Congress. With the ubiquitous presence of the Catholic Church also playing a role in shaping the opinions of both citizens and the government alike, the rights of LGBTI individuals hang in a worrisome balance. Still, in spite of the many such obstacles that lie ahead of LGBTI Colombians, the scales are tipping in their favor, and I am proud to say that Colombia's stance on this matter is one in favor of LGBTI rights, albeit somewhat apprehensively."

impressions

Most likely to be famous:

Andrés Altafulla

Best smile:

Lissette Escobar

Most athletic:

Andrea Ramírez

The Metamorphosis

A Personal Reflection on the OAS experience

By Cristina Suárez

She loves changes once she faces them. But initially, they scare her to the core of her soul ...

May 5, 2015. 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Approximately. Somewhere in Washington D.C. a call is received by this Colombian who will be the new, solitary intern of the most forgotten place in the whole Organization of American States: The Columbus Memorial Library (CML).

The author of this recollection of events does not intend to cast a negative light upon what is probably the most wonderful place throughout the length and breadth of this organization of the Americas. Holding the extensive past, documents, maps, pictures, and resolutions of such an important international entity is not an easy burden. The author now knows, firsthand, that the CML is history.

The person on the other end of the call, a woman with (what the intern-to-be thinks is) an Argentinean accent, is already outlining the responsibilities of her new position. No questions asked. No questions answered. The soon-to-be intern calls her mom, her second mom, her third mom (yes, she has about three other adopted moms because her friends' moms love her). She texts her best friends and her sister. Updates her Facebook status (of course) and continues living that day as the best day in a long time.

You see, she has had a couple of rough months. Since the departure of her dad - her best friend and confidante - to that impregnable place to which not even an American-Russian engineered rocket ship can gain access, nothing seems capable of luring this neophyte intern from her self-made carapace. Introvert and bookworm that she is, interning in the library will be Heaven.

She tries to ready herself for the changes to come in the next few days – living alone, graduating from college, moving out of what has been her habitat and home for the last four years. Feelings of freedom. Feelings of fear. The beginning of adulthood.

Adulthood is not adaptable to her personality (or vice versa). True, she is mature, responsible, punctual - a terrific worker. But how to escape the sure frowns upon her quirkiness, weird sense of humor, and indifference to dress suits and heels?

The day finally comes. June 4, 2015. Six o'clock in the morning. Silver Spring, Maryland. The intern-to-be is up. At least she wants to be. She is not; she wakes up considerably later and arrives well past the time of the first meeting with all the interns-to-be. She hates nothing more than arriving late, but commuting via the D.C. metro makes that highly probable. The meeting is over and the now-official interns of the OAS have gone through the socializing rituals. Horrible moment. CML intern rises to the occasion, pulling off a great fake. Later in the day, she meets two Chileans, two Brazilians, an Ecuadorian, a Jamaican, a Puerto Rican, a Mexican, and a Venezuelan. They don't know it yet, but they are going to succeed in befriending the CML intern from her shell.

First day in CML. It's just what the intern imagines. Not much talking to be done. She's going to be doing a lot of reading. Going through books and magazines. Organizing documents. Making lists and charts. Tedious, but she loves it! Exclusive access to documents and books! Off her bucket list comes working in a library.

In the end, she finds out she is more like the CML and less like her fellow interns. She has an epiphany: she might not change the Americas in embarking on this summer challenge, *but she will save her own little self.*

What is the legacy of her summer as an intern of the Organization of American States? A milestone - professionally and personally. Carapace intern has met beautiful people from all over the Americas who have unknowingly helped her to shed her shell for good. And she's excelled. And she did it in a place she always dreamt of working in (she remembers how she used to tell her dad how badly she wanted to be here one day). Being at the OAS has helped her to talk, laugh and be herself again. Might it even change her life forever?

The Last Word

(The inspiring closing message delivered by **Daniel Valverde**, MOAS Secretary General, at the Closing Session of the 22nd MOAS-PC)

Dear Chairs (Diego and Lissette), Committee Secretaries (Sandra and James), Public Information Officers (Diana and Devon), fellow delegates of the Permanent Council.

Good evening.

Yesterday and today, we have embarked in the hard task of coming up with innovative solutions to issues that have plagued our hemisphere for generations: racism and intolerance directed towards minority groups – specifically, afro-descendants, indigenous people and LGBTI persons.

I have been enlightened by the different approaches that the fellow delegates of the Americas have put together in the resolutions that were addressed in this Permanent Council.

The General Committee discussed the subject of racism against afro-descendants and indigenous people, focusing on three key issues: awareness, inclusion, and access to education. The recognition of the possibility of indigenous populations having their own education and justice system will be a great step forward towards legal recognition of their peculiar cultural differences. The acknowledgement of judicial biases faced by afro-descendants in the justice system, coupled with the proposed training of judicial officers (such as law enforcement and judges), voted by consensus in the resolution, are innovative approaches to the resolution of critical issues. I therefore encourage member states to tackle this historic debt of discriminatory treatment owed by the Americas to indigenous peoples and afro-descendants.

The Political and Juridical Affairs Committee proposed solutions to combat intolerance against LGBTI groups. The Committee divided into groups addressing violence, discrimination, and access to economic, social and cultural rights. The encouragement of member states to gather statistical information to demonstrate the scope of the social exclusion against LGBTI groups will enhance not only the capability of the OAS to address these matters, but also the capacity for member states to apply proper public policies domestically. Also, it is noteworthy that the resolution went beyond addressing basic or first generation human rights (such as the right to life or the right to non-discrimination), to adopt a more progressive stance, dealing with rights such as access to health services, education or other economic, social and cultural rights.

This exercise also allowed us to look at the OAS structure with a critical eye. The amount of time spent arguing form instead of substance is a charge civil society consistently levels against international organizations such as the OAS, and they have some truth in them. I hope that we as an Organization can continue to focus on responding to member states regarding these topics, to the best of our abilities, in a world that increasingly demands prompt and effective solutions.

Finally, I would like to congratulate my fellow delegates on the job that they did in these two days; to thank my fellow elected authorities for their commitment and the amazing work they've done. A special recognition is reserved for Diana and Devon, who, I believe, created the best newsletter in MOAS-PC history.

Thank you, and as they say in Costa Rica, “pura vida”.

impressions

Wow! What heels!:

Betsabé Yona

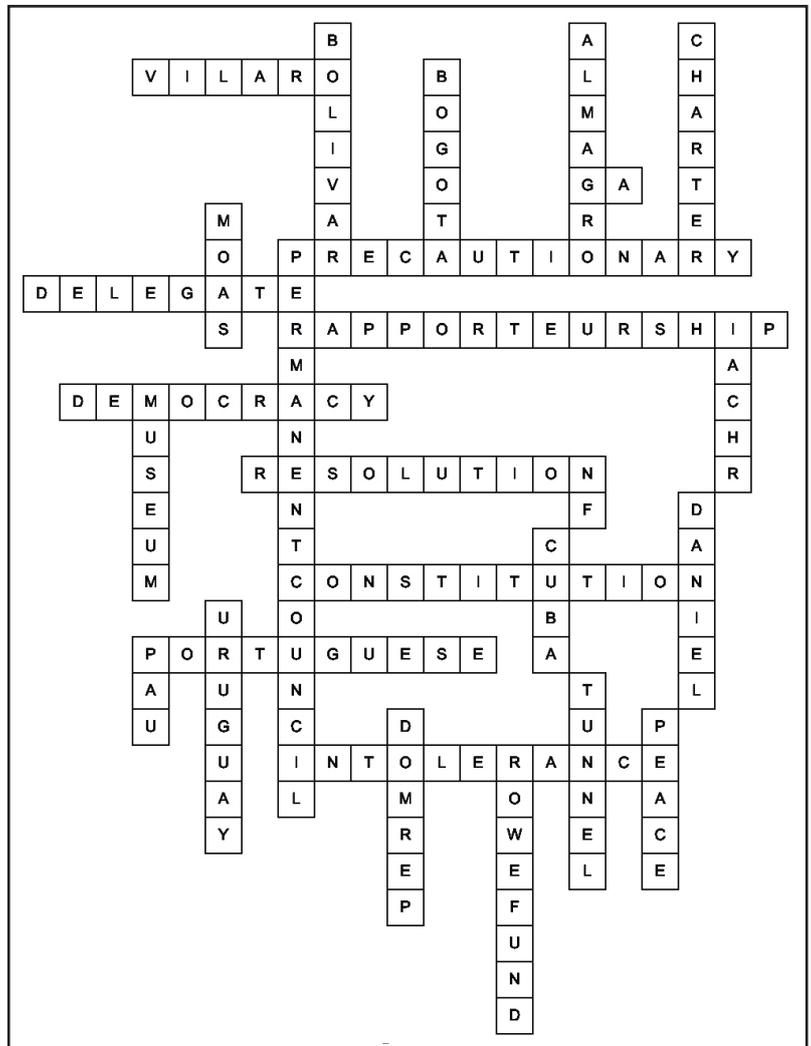
Most photogenic:

Génesis Dávila

Best to take home to mom and dad:

Javier Contreras

Welcoming Newsletter Crossword Answers



MOAS moments

MOAS MOMENTS - On the conduct of sessions:

I believe that the formal discussions and debate that took place during the plenary session were very well thought out. On the other hand, I sometimes noticed that some delegates wasted time by making unnecessary comments or correcting the English grammar of the resolutions too much, instead of really placing emphasis on the content.

MOAS MOMENTS - On linguistic challenges: Unfortunately, I noticed that the language barrier was a main obstacle for some of the delegates who had great ideas and proposals, but could not express themselves clearly [as they wanted to] because the discussion was not held in their native language.

MOAS MOMENTS - Humorous recollections:

A humorous aspect was seeing how some of the interns really got into character and got mad when delegates of the other Committee were questioning many of our resolution's clauses.

That moment when one delegate proposed to forego discussion of the second working group's resolutions clause by clause, but [to approve it en bloc] in the plenary session. A number of people noticed [the shocked] faces.



Our WINNER!
Alonso Castañeda

WORDS FROM DIANA & DEVON...

Dear Interns,

Parting is such sweet sorrow.

Never a more fitting conundrum to express the internal roil of emotions some, if not all, of us feel as our ten-week sojourn at the OAS comes to an end. It would be disingenuous to suggest that there were not a few irksome, challenging, or wearying days. But, from the words we heard and overheard, we sense that our colleagues, on the whole, experienced significant growth - professionally and personally.

The MOAS exercise, in particular, was a test of multiple dimensions. Yes, we witnessed testiness, provocations brought on by linguistic preferences, and the swapping of shortened tempers for stoicism as lunchtime loomed or sessions lengthened. But we have also seen and heard the laughter of nascent friendships and the bonds developed in after-work amity, and watched our co-interns bend themselves to the tasks assigned in their respective departments, planting seeds of diligence towards their future careers. And for all this, we thank the OAS, our supervisors, ancillary staff, the Human Resources Department (in particular, Natalia Franco and her team) and the MOAS Coordination team, headed by Nelly Robinson.

If things did not always work perfectly for us, we had this – a perfect opportunity to come close to an Organization that is ours, one which, faced with an imperfect world, imperfect systems, imperfect people, strives everyday to bring a brighter future to the Americas. For ten weeks, we were a part of that. For the rest of our lives, we are resolved to improve upon it. Indeed, we leave resolved.

There will be some sadness today, tomorrow, and days beyond, as bags are packed and buddies bid goodbye. To each other, to Washington DC (and squirrels romping on lawns and cavorting in trees – we named one Diva), to staff and more. But as we reflect on what the OAS has done for us, there will be, too, a kind of sorrowful sweetness.

A plus tard.
Nunca me olvides.
A gente se vê.
So long.

