

PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
COMMITTEE ON INTER-AMERICAN SUMMITS MANAGEMENT
AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION
IN OAS ACTIVITIES

OEA/Ser.G
CP/CISC-602/11
1 December 2011
Original: Spanish/English

REPORT ON PARTICIPATION OF
CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIAL ACTORS IN OAS ACTIVITIES

(January 1 – November 30, 2011)

Presented by the
Department of International Affairs
Organization of American States
Washington, D.C.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This “Report on Participation of Civil Society Organizations and Social Actors in OAS Activities,” which covers the period from January 1 to November 30, 2011, was prepared by the Department of International Affairs (DIA) of the Organization of American States (OAS) as part of the work plan of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities, adopted at the Committee’s meeting of October 4, 2011.

The purpose of this document is to present a detailed report on the work of the DIA to promote and strengthen participation by civil society organizations and social actors in OAS activities, in accordance with the mandates of the political bodies of the Organization, as well as the relations that ensue from that participation with the technical areas of the General Secretariat and the political organs of the Organization.

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CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIAL ACTORS
IN OAS ACTIVITIES

January 1 – November 30, 2011

I. INTRODUCTION

This document contains information on the work done by the Department of International Affairs (DIA) from January 1 to November 30, 2011, to promote and broaden the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) and social actors in OAS activities. The activities mentioned in this report were carried out in keeping with the mandates issued in the following resolutions of the Permanent Council and the OAS General Assembly:

- Inter-American Democratic Charter
- [CP/RES. 759 \(1217/99\)](#) “Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities,” endorsed by General Assembly resolution [AG/RES. 1707 \(XXX/O/00\)](#) “The Organization of American States and Civil Society”
- [CP/RES. 840 \(1361/03\)](#) “Strategies for Increasing and Strengthening Participation by Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities,” endorsed by General Assembly resolution [AG/RES. 1915 \(XXXIII-O/03\)](#) “Increasing and Strengthening Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities”
- [AG/RES. 2612 \(XXXIII-O/10\)](#) “Increasing and Strengthening the Participation of Civil Society and Social Actors in the Activities of the Organization of American States and in the Summits of the Americas Process”
- [AG/RES. 2555 \(XL-O/10\)](#) “Promotion and Strengthening of Democracy: Follow-up to the Inter-American Democratic Charter”
- [AG/RES. 2635 \(XXXIII-O/11\)](#) “Increasing and Strengthening the Participation of Civil Society and Social Actors in the Activities of the Organization of American States and in the Summits of the Americas Process”
- [AG/RES. 2694 \(XLI-O/11\)](#) “Promotion and Strengthening of Democracy: Follow-up to the Inter-American Democratic Charter”

In 1999, the Permanent Council of the Organization adopted resolution CP/RES. 759 (1217/99) “Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities,” which defines these organizations as any national or international institution, organization, or entity made up of natural or juridical persons of a nongovernmental nature, and set out the mechanisms for participation in the political organs of the Organization.

In 2001, all 34 democratic countries of the Americas reaffirmed their commitment to the participation of citizens and social organizations in the design and implementation of public policies through the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Since its adoption, the Charter has been the Organization's road map in its endeavors to advance democracy in the Hemisphere and has guided the efforts of governments to enhance it. Article 6 of the Charter reiterates that “it is the right and responsibility of all citizens to participate in decisions relating to their own development. This is also a necessary condition for the full and effective exercise of democracy.”

For its part, Article 26 urges the OAS to continue “to carry out programs and activities designed to promote democratic principles and practices and strengthen a democratic culture in the Hemisphere.” To that end, it states that “the OAS will consult and cooperate on an ongoing basis with member states and take into account the contributions of civil society organizations working in those fields.” This year, upon celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the member states reaffirmed its importance as the principal regional instrument for democratic governance.

The commitment of the member states to continue strengthening and implementing effective mechanisms and concrete actions for civil society participation in the activities of the OAS and in the Summits of the Americas process has been reiterated since 2003 in the mandates adopted by the Summits as well as in subsequent resolutions adopted by the OAS General Assembly.

The activities carried out by the DIA in the period covered by this report are in response to the mandates contained in the above resolutions, which instruct the Permanent Council, the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), and the General Secretariat to continue to actively support their registration and facilitate the implementation of strategies for increasing and strengthening participation by CSOs in OAS activities, and in its organs, agencies, and entities, with the support of the General Secretariat.

To that end, Executive Order 08-01 rev. 4 assigns the Department of International Affairs the responsibility of developing and executing strategies and activities designed to promote and broaden civil society participation in activities related to the Organization, including its General Assembly and ministerial meetings; conducting the process of registering civil society organizations in the OAS; and providing secretariat services and technical support to the CISC in all matters related to civil society participation, among other functions.

This document contains a summary of the main activities carried out in these areas, including registration of CSOs in the OAS; promotion of access to information through the Organization's civil society web page and through communications sent to facilitate their participation in Summits of the Americas preparatory processes, the OAS General Assembly, the Permanent Council, meetings of the CISC, and other meetings at ministerial level and of other political organs; as well as an account of the activities held to mark the 10th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

II. REGISTRATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE OAS

The Register of Civil Society Organizations was established by resolution CP/RES. 759 (1217/99), “Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities,” and endorsed by General Assembly resolution AG/RES. 1707 (XXX/O/00), “The Organization of American States and Civil Society.” The Register is the main mechanism for facilitating CSO participation in OAS activities and grants these organizations the right to attend and submit recommendations on their areas of expertise at public meetings of the Permanent Council and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), as well as meetings of their subsidiary bodies and ministerial meetings.

The commitment of the member states to promote the Register has been reiterated on several occasions, most notably in resolution CP/RES. 840 (1361/03), “Strategies for Increasing and

Strengthening Participation by Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities,” which instructs the General Secretariat to actively promote the registration of civil society organizations and their participation in OAS activities. Furthermore, at all subsequent regular session of the General Assembly the member states have resolved to continue to actively support and promote the registration of civil society organizations and their participation in OAS activities with the support of the General Secretariat.

This year, the DIA has processed and submitted applications from 56 civil society organizations to be included in the OAS register. The organizations are from 18 member states, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela, in addition to one based in the United Kingdom. The main areas of activity of these organizations are advancement and protection of human rights, freedom of expression and access to public information, democratic strengthening, the fight against corruption, economic and social development, and the fight against racial and gender discrimination, among others.

Of the 56 applications, 45 were approved by the Permanent Council for inclusion in the OAS Register, 5 are awaiting a decision on the part of the CISC, and 6 are soon to be submitted to the Committee.

III. COMMUNICATIONS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

1. Civil society web page

Resolution CP/RES. 840 instructs the General Secretariat to “promote broad use of the OAS website by civil society in the Hemisphere as a primary tool of information and participation.” In keeping with this mandate, the DIA makes significant efforts to increase access to information and strengthen channels of communication among civil society, the OAS General Secretariat, and member states. The OAS civil society webpage (www.civil-society.oas.org) is the principal mechanism for timely information disclosure to civil society organizations and other social actors on prospective and past OAS activities.

The webpage is organized in a format that is easy to browse and includes sections with information on past and future events, participation mechanisms, and a current list of CSOs registered with the OAS in alphabetical order and by country.

It also includes chronological and thematic compilations of all civil society recommendations since 2002, information on procedures and requirements for registration with the OAS, the Manual for Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities, a calendar of events, OAS documents regarding civil society participation in the Organization's activities, information on civil society networks, frequently asked questions, information on the Department of International Affairs, and contact information.

The Department updates the webpage daily and provides timely information in real-time about the activities of the Organization and opportunities for civil society participation.

2. Communications

The DIA carries out this activity in accordance with AG/RES. 840, which instructs the General Secretariat to transmit electronically to the registered civil society organizations the draft resolutions presented for consideration by the General Assembly as well as the resolutions adopted at each session thereof, giving them the opportunity to make suggestions and soliciting their comments and their assistance in effectively implementing those resolutions, as appropriate.

In 2011, the DIA sent more than 140 communications to CSOs on OAS activities and opportunities for their participation therein. For circulation purposes, this department has a database that contains the registered CSOs as well as a further 4,800 civil society representatives who participate or are interested in the activities of the OAS. These organizations regularly receive invitations, news reports, bulletins, and other information on the Organization's programs, the status of negotiations on different resolutions or declarations in the Permanent Council and its committees, and other decisions adopted by the political organs of the OAS.

As part of its efforts constantly to improve communication with civil society organizations, the DIA updated its electronic mail distribution system to ensure prompter delivery and prevent unsolicited mail or "spam." The *Mail Manager* system can instantly disseminate information of interest to civil society. This system has enabled us to identify inactive or closed e-mail addresses, which has boosted the efficiency and effectiveness of our work.

Furthermore, the DIA has maintained a constant line of communication to CSOs and has sent more than 1,500 e-mails to civil society in response to requests for information, queries about registration and participation in OAS activities, and other relevant matters.

IV. PARTICIPATION IN OAS MEETINGS

Resolution CP/RES. 759 provides that registered civil society organizations may designate representatives to attend public meetings of the Permanent Council, CIDI, their subsidiary bodies, and other specialized OAS conferences, in accordance with the guidelines laid down for that purpose.

In addition, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, at Article 26, assigns the OAS the responsibility of continuing "to carry out programs and activities designed to promote democratic principles and practices and strengthen a democratic culture in the Hemisphere... The OAS will consult and cooperate on an ongoing basis with member states and take into account the contributions of civil society organizations working in those fields."

From January to November 2011, the Department of International Affairs facilitated on-site and virtual participation for a large number of CSOs at 29 OAS meetings, including the forty-first regular session of the General Assembly, meetings of the Permanent Council and its committees, meetings of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), ministerial meetings, other OAS specialized conferences, and events to mark the 10th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

In the framework of the **Permanent Council Special Working Group to Reflect on the Workings of the IACHR with a View to Strengthening the IAHRs**, the Department of

International Affairs arranged for nearly 40 civil society organizations and other social actors to attend a meeting of the above working group on October 28, 2011, at which 16 civil society representatives and other experts offered recommendations and engaged in discussions with member states' representatives on the workings of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights with a view to strengthening the inter-American human rights system.

Furthermore, an open invitation was issued for civil society to submit written documents with their recommendations. Recommendations were received from 15 civil society organizations and networks involved in the advancement of human rights. The recommendations were distributed to the member states and served as inputs for their discussions on their final recommendations for strengthening the IAHR, which will be presented to the Permanent Council in December 2011.

1. In connection with the forty-first regular session of the General Assembly

- a. Eighth Civil Society Hemispheric Forum, Washington, D.C., April 25 and 26, 2011
- b. Special Meeting of the CISC, Washington, D.C., April 26, 2011
- c. Informal Conversation between the OAS Secretary General and Representatives of Civil Society Organizations, San Salvador, El Salvador, June 4, 2011
- d. Coordination Meeting between Civil Society Organizations, San Salvador, El Salvador, June 4, 2011
- e. Dialogue of the Heads of Delegation and the Secretary General with Civil Society Representatives on the Theme of the General Assembly: "Citizen Security in the Americas, San Salvador, El Salvador, June 5, 2011

2. In connection with the Permanent Council, Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), and their committees

- a. Special meeting of the OAS Permanent Council to celebrate International Year for People of African Descent, Washington, D.C., March 15, 2011
- b. Sixteenth Regular Meeting of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), Washington, D.C., May 9 and 10, 2011
- c. Meeting with Civil Society Organizations of the Special Working Group to Reflect on the Workings of the IACHR with a View to Strengthening the IAHR, Washington, D.C., October 28, 2011
- d. XVII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) of the OAS "Advancing Economic and Social Recovery with Sustainable Development, Decent Work, and Social Inclusion," San Salvador, El Salvador, October 31, 2011
- e. Fiftieth Regular Session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) "25th Anniversary of Its Founding," Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 2 to 4, 2011
- f. Fifth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and Highest Appropriate Authorities of Culture, Washington, D.C. November 9 and 10, 2011
- g. Special Meeting of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) on Persons with Disabilities, Washington, D.C. November 17, 2011

- h. Third Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities on Science and Technology “Translational Science, Technology and Innovation: Knowledge for Competitiveness and Prosperity,” Panama City, Panama, November 17 and 18, 2011
- i. Third Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security in the Americas (MISPA III), Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, November 17 and 18, 2011
- j. Special meeting of the Permanent Council with all sectors of society, including civil society, in the framework of the 10th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, Washington, D.C. November 30, 2011

3. In connection with the 10th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter

- a. Hemispheric Commemoration of the Tenth Anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and Renewal of the Commitment of the Americas to Democracy, Valparaíso, Chile, September 3 and 4, 2011
- b. Subregional Dialogue of the Members of the Central American Integration System and Mexico “Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development,” San José, Costa Rica, May 11 to 13, 2011
- c. Seminar on the Role of the Private Sector and Other Actors in Support of Democracy, Washington, D.C., April 18, 2011
- d. Workshop Dialogue on the Role of Diplomats and the Strengthening of Democracy through the Support of Civil Society, Santiago, Chile March 10 and 11, 2011

4. In connection with other OAS meetings

- a. Regional Conference: The Situation of Afro-descendants in the Americas: Outlook and Challenges, Washington, D.C., March 14, 2011
- b. Eleventh Regular Session of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), Washington, D.C., March 17, 2011
- c. Third Conference of States Parties of the Mechanism to Follow Up on the Convention of Belém do Pará (MESECVI) Antigua, Guatemala, March 24 and 25, 2011
- d. Workshop “Learning from Experience: Bilateral Cooperation in Migration Management,” Washington, D.C., April 12 and 13, 2011
- e. First Special Meeting of the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (CEDDIS), San Salvador, El Salvador, May 4 and 5, 2011
- f. Second Conference on Progress and Challenges in Hemispheric Cooperation against Corruption, Cali, Colombia, June 21 and 22, 2011
- g. Meeting with the IACHR on the Amendment of Article 11 of Its Rules of Procedure, Washington, D.C., July 19, 2011
- h. First Preparatory Workshop for the Second Report on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (CIADDIS) and of the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (PAD), Buenos Aires, Argentina, September 19 and 20, 2011

- i. XIX Inter-American Travel Congress “Tourism: A Challenge to Poverty,” San Salvador, El Salvador, September 29 and 30, 2011
- j. Dialogue on Governance, Public Participation, and Gender Mainstreaming, Washington, D.C., October 27, 2011

The DIA also facilitated and promoted the virtual participation of CSOs in the Hemispheric Virtual Consultation: Social determinants of health from the perspective of civil society in the region of the Americas, carried out by the Department of Social Development and Employment (DDSE) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Furthermore, the DIA provided assistance to the Department of Social Development and Employment by circulating the announcement of the First Preparatory Workshop for the Second Report on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (CIADDIS) and of the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (PAD), which was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on September 19 and 20, 2011.

Likewise, it distributed invitations to the Preparatory Workshop for the Second Report on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (CIADDIS) and of the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (PAD) for the countries of the Andean region (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela), which will be held on December 6 and 7, in Bogotá, Colombia.

In the framework of the activities in preparation for the Sixth Summit of the Americas, the DIA provided support to the Summits of the Americas Secretariat by encouraging the on-site and virtual participation of CSOs and social actors in the following activities:

- a. XXXI OAS Policy Roundtable “Connecting the Americas: Partners for Prosperity,” Washington, D.C., September 14, 2011
- b. XXXII OAS Policy Roundtable “The Road to Cartagena: Hemispheric Cooperation to Combat Natural Disasters,” Washington, D.C., October 6, 2011
- c. XXXV OAS Policy Roundtable “The Road to Cartagena: Hemispheric Cooperation to Reduce Poverty and Inequality,” Washington, D.C., November 4, 2011
- d. Second Hemispheric Forum “Connecting the Women of the Americas: Partners for Prosperity,” Washington, D.C., October 3 to 21, 2011 - in the framework of the Fourth Meeting of Ministers or of the Highest-Ranking Authorities Responsible for the Advancement of Women in the Member State of the OAS
- e. Virtual Consultation “Summit Talk: Natural Disasters,” October 4 to November 4, 2011
- f. Virtual Consultation “Summit Talk: Poverty and Inequity,” October 14 to November 4, 2011

V. COMMEMORATION OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER.

In order to promote greater awareness of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and support the OAS in its commitment to preserve democracy in the Hemisphere, several activities were held to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Charter and to take stock of the 10 years since its adoption, which marked the beginning of a new era in protection and advancement of democracy in the region. Those activities included promotion, dissemination, and raising awareness of the Inter-American Democratic Charter in the region.

1. Subregional Dialogue of the Members of the Central American Integration System and Mexico “Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development,” San José, Costa Rica, May 11 to 13, 2011

As regards commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Department held a series of events in which civil society organizations, academic institutions, and other social actors participated, in order to examine and discuss progress, challenges, and proposals for strengthening democracy in the region.

From May 11 to 13, 2011, the OAS General Secretariat, in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, International IDEA, the Foundation for Peace and Democracy (FUNPADEM), and the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), organized the Subregional Dialogue of the Members of the Central American Integration System and Mexico “Democracy for Peace, Security, and Development,” in San José, Costa Rica.

The subregional dialogue was attended by around 80 individuals from Central America, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic, including representatives of governments, political parties, civil society organizations, academic institutions, the private sector and labor, media and press organizations, and regional intergovernmental organizations, among others.

The dialogue comprised six roundtables on:

1. Democracy, political parties, and political representation
2. Democracy, inclusion, and social dialogue
3. Democracy and subregional integration
4. Democracy and the rule of law
5. Democracy, citizen security, and organized crime
6. The Inter-American Democratic Charter: Challenges and opportunities

Prior to the event, each roundtable panelist presented a basic paper or reference document on the topic of their respective table to serve as an input and stimulate the discussion among the participants. Furthermore, each table had a rapporteur, who kept a record of the discussions. The Dialogue produced a series of concrete recommendations for strengthening democracy in Central America and the region as a whole.

The Ambassador Costa Rica, with support from the DIA, presented a report on the meeting and is publishing a final report on the Dialogue that includes the conclusions and

recommendations of each table, texts of the remarks of the panelists, and a list of participants. The report is expected to be available for distribution among the member states presently.

2. Hemispheric Commemoration of the Tenth Anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and Renewal of the Commitment of the Americas to Democracy, Valparaíso, Chile, September 3 and 4, 2011

The Department provided assistance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile in organizing and holding the High-Level Hemispheric Commemoration of the Tenth Anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and Renewal of the Commitment of the Americas to Democracy, in Valparaíso, Chile, on September 3 and 4, 2011.

The main event consisted of a hemispheric forum attended by ministers of foreign affairs, representatives of member states, and others who took part in the drafting of the Charter and were instrumental in its adoption. The two-day forum provided an opportunity for discussions and an exchange of views on the 10 years of the Charter, reflections on the current state of democracy in the region, analysis of the core elements of democracy, and renewal of the commitment to democracy.

In attendance at the Hemispheric Commemoration were the President of Chile, Sebastián Piñera; the OAS Secretary General; ministers of foreign affairs and heads of delegation from many OAS member states; the former OAS Secretary General and once-president of Colombia, César Gaviria; the President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru, Diego García Sayán; various representatives of the OAS General Secretariat, and members of the diplomatic corps.

In addition, in collaboration with the Chilean Foreign Ministry, the DIA facilitated the participation in the event of several civil society organizations that work in the area of democratic strengthening.

3. Special meeting of the Permanent Council with all sectors of society, including civil society, on the contribution of these organizations to strengthening democratic culture in the Hemisphere, in the framework of the 10th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, Washington, D.C., November 30, 2011

Pursuant to resolutions AG/RES. 2694 (XLI-O/11) and AG/RES. 2555 (XL-O/10), "Promotion and Strengthening of Democracy: Follow-up to the Inter-American Democratic Charter," as well as CP/RES. 759 (1217/99) "Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities," on November 30, 2011, the Permanent Council convened a special meeting with all sectors of society, including civil society, in order to discuss and share best practices and recommendations among member states, civil society, and other social actors on how to promote democratic governance and foster a democratic culture in the Americas.

The DIA put forward the proposal for the special meeting, which was approved by the Permanent Council, and broadly distributed by means of an announcement to the various

sectors of society on its database, inviting civil society organizations to participate physically or to submit written recommendations on the theme of the special meeting.

In the course of the meeting,, representatives from six civil society organizations offered remarks and presented recommendations to member states on strengthening democracy and the effectiveness of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, particularly with regard to institution building, electoral processes, early warning mechanisms, transparency in public management, youth participation, education in democratic values, and human and social development, among other issues. In addition, written recommendations were received from two civil society organizations that were unable to attend; these were distributed among the member states for their consideration.

VI. OTHER ACTIVITIES WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

For the fourth consecutive year, the Department of International Affairs, in cooperation with the civil society organization *Global Rights – Partners for Justice*, organized the annual workshop “Increasing the Participation and Impact of Afro-Descendant women and men in the OAS and in the Summits of the Americas Process” at OAS headquarters, from October 31 to November 4, 2011. The workshop was attended by some 15 leaders of civil society organizations that work on behalf of Afro-descendants in Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, United States, and Uruguay. The purpose of the meeting was to increase awareness of the OAS and the Summits of the Americas process among Afro-descendant organizations, as well as to encourage more Afro-descendant organizations to register with the OAS.

Civil society representatives met with representatives of the DIA, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Inter-American Commission of Women, Summits Secretariat, and Secretariats for Legal Affairs, Integral Development, External Relations, Multidimensional Security, and Political Affairs.

The workshop was held in line with the Project to Incorporate the Issue of People of African Descent into the Policies and Programs of the OAS, the objective of which is to encourage the inclusion of this group as a crosscutting element in the design of OAS policies and programs and to put forward technical and policy recommendations to the principal political bodies of the inter-American system.

In addition, the DIA has promoted closer ties between CSOs and the technical areas of the OAS, and in so doing has facilitated greater awareness and experience sharing on matters concerning persons with disabilities, gender equity, indigenous peoples, promotion and strengthening of democracy, protection of human rights, security, and social development and employment, among other issues.

Based on the foregoing, the DIA believes that it has amply fulfilled the tasks entrusted by the member states and would like, in particular, to thank the permanent missions of Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and the United States, the permanent observers of Spain and Turkey, and International IDEA for their continuous support in these efforts to broaden opportunities for civil society participation in the OAS.