The Dialogue of the Heads of Delegation and Secretary General with the Representatives of the Workers, Private Sector, Civil Society and Social Actors, held in the framework of the XLII OAS General Assembly, allowed the representatives of networks of civil society organizations and social actors, workers and the private sector to present their recommendations to the Heads of Delegation of the OAS Member States and Secretary General on the central theme of the General Assembly “Food Security with Sovereignty in the Americas,” as well as other topics on the inter-American agenda. Similarly, it allowed for an exchange of points of views and policies that are being implemented by the Member States and OAS around these topics. The mentioned Dialogue was chaired initially by Mr. David Choquehuanca Cespedes, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, in addition to Mr. Juan Carlos Alurralde Tejada, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, in their capacity as representatives of the host country of the XLII General Assembly.

Minister Choquehuanca welcomed the Heads of Delegation, OAS Secretary General, Jose Miguel Insulza, Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Albert Ramdin, and the representatives of civil society, social actors, workers and the private sector. The Minister recognized that this dialogue is the best opportunity to exchange opinions and points of view between the citizens of the Americas and the representatives of the Member States and OAS General Secretariat on the issues that form the inter-American agenda, underscoring the main theme of the General Assembly.

For his part, the OAS Secretary General recognized that food security is one of the greatest challenges that the region faces. In relation to the Millennium Development Goals, he highlighted that although the countries are on a good path to reducing poverty by 2015, the number of people who suffer from hunger has not be reduced. He expressed that 9% of the total population of Latin America and the Caribbean – approximately 53 million men, women and children – suffer from hunger and malnutrition, and they do not reach the calorie intake requirements, especially in rural zones; shortcomings that should not exist in a continent that produces enough to feed all of its inhabitants. He explained that this demonstrates the challenges of our region in food distribution.

The Secretary General recalled that this Dialogue, in the framework of the General Assembly, began ten years earlier and he referred to the activities carried out by the OAS with civil society organizations, workers, the private sector and other social actors in preparation for the meeting. Moreover, he stressed the importance of a broad civil society participation in all OAS activities, including in ministerial
meetings on tourism, culture, science and technology, education and security; as well as in the context of the Organization’s political bodies.

Following the welcoming remarks by the Secretary General, Mr. Juan Carlos Alurralde Tejada, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, commented on the importance of the General Assembly topic to his government to promote the policy “eat well to live well,” which has the objective of confronting the different challenges of the food crisis in the region, such as the increase in food prices and the growing conflicts for access to land and water. He added that the concept of “living well” implies establishing the material and spiritual conditions for the full development of society in harmony with nature, with emphasis on the most vulnerable population. Vice Minister Alurralde proposed five work areas on behalf of the Government of Bolivia: the sovereign exercise of the States over aspects related to production; access to and consumption of food in their territory; the production of food in harmony with nature and respect for Mother Nature; the human right to food; and the establishment of new national mechanisms on this subject. Vice Minister Alurralde concluded explaining the methodology of the meeting and offered the floor to the civil society representatives.

INTERVENTION BY A YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Isaac Ramirez, Chair of the XXX Model OAS General Assembly (XXX MOAS) for Universities of the Hemisphere, presented the conclusions reached by the more than 500 young university students of the Americas who participated in the model that took place on May 16-19 in Cochabamba, and where they discussed the topics of the General Assembly, especially food security, family agriculture and the right to water. Mr. Ramirez expressed that the participants of the XXX MOAS adopted 88 resolutions on the mentioned topics, underscoring the need for Member States to work together for development and to enjoy the right to food in order to have a better quality of life with dignity for all the citizens of the Americas. He reiterated the commitment of the youth to contribute their voices to improve the living conditions of the citizens of the Americas and presented the book of resolutions adopted by the MOAS to Vice Minister Alurralde.

INTERVENTIONS BY CIVIL SOCIETY

Mr. Jorge Gomez, representative of the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT), presented civil society's recommendations in relation to food security. He held that civil society considers that food sovereignty is the right of the peoples to define policies and strategies for sustainable food production, distribution and consumption, respecting cultures and the diversity of alternatives of fisheries, agricultural production, commercialization, and management of rural spaces, in which women play a fundamental role. Furthermore, he highlighted the need for Member States to guarantee public policies in comprehensive management of food sovereignty with a view to ensure nutrition, while at the same time, protecting the environment.

Ms. Alejandra Nuño of CEJIL Mesoamerica, made her intervention in representation of the civil society organizations that work in the area of human rights and shared their concern for gender-based violence in the region, trafficking of persons and slave labor, attacks against human rights defenders, the absence of children, adolescents and older persons in public policies, the exclusion of thousands of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, discrimination due to sexual orientation and gender identity, restrictions to freedom of expression and disrespect for religious plurality and equality, among others. Similarly, she expressed civil society’s concern for the increase in security policies that restrict rights, the lack of independence of the judicial branch, climate change, poverty and food sovereignty. On another note,
she demanded that the Member States accelerate the discussion and approval process of the Draft Inter-American Convention against Racism and all Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance; she emphasized the need for Member States to generate spaces for dialogue with civil society; and urged the Heads of Delegation to maximize their efforts to fight against all forms of terrorism, with special attention toward groups from outside the hemisphere.

Ms. Nuño underlined the importance for Member States to promote and establish spaces for children’s participation in decision making of food security public policies and actions. At the same time, she shared civil society’s worry about the intention by several States and other actors to weaken the Inter-American Human Rights System and called on the Heads of Delegation to comply with the resolutions of the human rights protection bodies of the Inter-American System, to grant them adequate resources and to advance in the universality of the System, ratifying the American Convention on Human Rights. Finally, she pointed out, with concern, that only four of the English-speaking countries in the Caribbean have ratified the Convention and only one country of that region has recognized the contentious jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

Mr. Jose Henrique Rodrigues Torres of the Asociación de Jueces para la Democracia continued the presentation of the recommendations of civil society organizations that work in human rights about strengthening the Inter-American Human Rights System (IAHRS). He expressed concern at the existence of open resolutions that refer to the System and whose final redaction could debilitate the protection of human rights and the guarantee of justice for the victims of the region. In addition, he expressed that, having passed through democratic transitions, today the governments and peoples of the region face the challenge of constituting full democracies in a context of structural inequality, violence and impunity; and that the bodies of the IAHRS have been and should be conceived as instruments for the defense of the victims and complementary tools to the efforts of States. For this reason, he asked the States, particularly those that play a role as global leaders, not to promote measures that weaken the Inter-American Human Rights System.

INTERVENTION BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Mr. Roberto Coraite, indigenous representative of Bolivia, began his intervention advocating to Member States for the urgent approval of the draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, while at the same time calling for a greater social awareness of this issue. He underscored the importance for OAS Member States to adopt measures that ensure food security and a new form of production with respect to Mother Nature. In this sense, he indicated that indigenous peoples do not wish to be obligated to consume harmful transgenic products.

Similarly, Mr. Coraite commented that “living well” means the right to eat nutritious meals and that development must guarantee the continuity of life and not lead to the extinction of human existence. He urged the States to provide the fiscal resources to the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, since this would be adequate to confront the issues that affect indigenous peoples in the region and allow them to interact regularly with the OAS.

INTERVENTIONS BY WORKERS REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Francisco Quijano, representative of the Consejo Sindical de Asesoramiento Técnico (COSATE), underscored the accelerated economic growth in South America in comparison to the rest of the region due to the adoption of policies in some countries that created an increase in the minimum wage, as well
as income transfer programs and investment in infrastructure. He affirmed that the role of the State should be strengthened in the promotion of social inclusion and deepening of regional integration processes. On a different note, he stressed the need to strengthen freedom of association and the rights to collective negotiation in different countries (Colombia, Honduras and Guatemala), and declared his concern for the law in the United States that prohibits the unionization of government employees, as well as the lack of compliance by some States that have ratified declarations 87 and 98 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) related to union freedoms and collective negotiation, and affirmed the importance of ensuring decent work.

Mr. Oscar Olivos, representative of the Central Autónoma de Trabajadores (CAT) de Chile, celebrated the recent increase of workers’ participation in the OAS and emphasized their participation in the Sixth Summit of the Americas and their support to the sustainable development strategy adopted by the States. Furthermore, he emphasized the need to strengthen freedom of expression and access to information, condemning the acts of violence against journalists in Mexico, Honduras and Colombia; and the need for public policies that guarantee free and quality public education. With respect to public security and human rights, he expressed his concern for the violence against union members, the presence of foreign military bases and the need to reduce military spending and increase social spending.

INTERVENTIONS BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR

With regards to food security, Mr. Hernan Pitto, Representative of the Asociación de Industriales Latinoamericanos (AILA), referred to the issues of investment in production, biotechnology and corporate social responsibility, highlighting the important role of our region in providing the global food supply. In this regard, he pointed out that it is fundamental to strengthen the output of the agricultural population through greater investment in production in order to strengthen food security. He urged the governments of the region to promote private sector ventures that aim to improve the quality and nutritional content of food, and underscored respect for the role of biotechnologies. He suggested that the situation of transgenic foods should be analyzed from a scientific perspective that allows for its production in standardized biosecurity conditions at the global level.

Mr. Daniel Sanchez of the Confederación de Empresarios Privados de Bolivia, mentioned that the imbalances in supply and demand in the global food market open an opportunity for the development and transformation of production in the region given its great agrifood potential. Achieving both food security and food sovereignty places the region in an ideal situation to promote its self-sufficiency in food. He added that the prohibition of exports hinders national production, the loss of external markets, price distortion, inflationary pressures, problems of scarcity, limited access, and the lack of availability of food, impacting the most vulnerable sector.

Moreover, Mr. Sanchez underscored the two greatest challenges of the region: developing the production capacity in agricultural and forestry areas, including the claims and valorization of peasant and indigenous communities in order to augment production both for exportation and domestic consumption; and to transform the agricultural sector into a motor for economic growth and job creation. To overcome these challenges, he stated that public policies that stimulate food chains with greater comparative advantages are needed, as well as the integration of small farmers into the agri-business and exportation chains. He advocated for the respect for labor laws, in addition to a national policy that ensures the stability of macroeconomic variables. He proposed that the best means to
ensure food security with sovereignty is to produce more, at lower and more competitive prices, and in a setting of free competition, and economic security and certainty.

Upon concluding the first round of interventions by representatives of civil society, workers, private sector and other social actors, the floor was offered to the Heads of Delegation of the Member States to refer to the recommendations presented.

INTERVENTIONS BY THE MEMBER STATES

Ms. Diane Ablonczy, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs) of Canada, expressed her gratitude to the Government of Bolivia for coordinating the Dialogue, which she recognized as a key element of the General Assembly. She added that she felt honored to receive the constructive recommendations of civil society that are of vital importance to strengthening the Inter-American System, and she assured that they would be taken into consideration by her government. In relation to General Assembly theme, Minister Ablonczy underscored civil society’s contributions, highlighting that in the context of the current food crisis, it is necessary to increase access to food and satisfy the demand of the population, bearing in mind that diverse experts have confirmed the need to double global food production by 2050. In this regard, the Canadian Minister commented that to achieve this goal, the different points of view and perspectives of civil society are necessary, and she held that civil society and other social actors are allies in improving the life of the peoples of the region.

Ambassador Dario Paya, Permanent Representative of Chile to the OAS, thanked the social actors leaders for the work they perform and for the recommendations presented to the Assembly. He emphasized the importance Chile grants to listening to civil society and recognized that the spaces that the OAS has developed since 1999 and the nearly 400 civil society organizations that are registered to participate in OAS activities are a reflection of civil society’s vitality, seriousness and commitment, making it the Organization’s most important strategic partner. In this regard, the Permanent Representative of Chile made reference to the contribution by his country to the “Specific Fund to Support the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities and in the Summits of the American Process” as an example of its commitment to strengthening civil society’s presence and he invited other States to consider the possibility of also contributing to the Fund.

Ambassador Joel Hernandez Garcia, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the OAS, expressed his appreciation for the social actors' input and recommendations, and assured that they guide and provide structure to the work of the delegations. In relation to the participation of Mexican civil society in OAS activities, he highlighted, with satisfaction, that 30 Mexican organizations form part of the OAS Civil Society Registry and shared that his government promotes their participation through: 1) guidance about cooperation with the OAS through promoting CSOs’ registration with the Organizations and the dissemination of the activities implemented by the OAS; 2) facilitating the exchange of information between civil society and the OAS; 3) disseminating topics of hemispheric interest; 4) virtual access to the OAS Website and its activities; and 5) propagation of OAS activities through the Portal of the Secretariat for External Relations of Mexico. The Permanent Representative of Mexico added that the fluctuations in food prices have represented a risk to low-income countries, and he assured that during the VIII G-20 Summit that will take place in Cabo San Lucas this year, the Mexican Government will include the issue of food security on the agenda, thereby reaffirming the important role of civil society, and confirmed that the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) will be present in the G-20 meeting.
Ambassador Carmen Lomellin, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the OAS, expressed her country’s commitment to collaborate in the coordination of national strategies to promote food security and build the capacity of small farmers. She pointed out that children and youth constitute the most vulnerable sector to food insecurity in the region and that a greater investment in agriculture is contributing to job creation in low-income families, the productivity of farmers and access to health and nutrition services. In addition, Ambassador Lomellin affirmed that it is necessary to promote public-private partnerships to strengthen production in the region, since no State can confront the challenges alone, and needs the support of the private sector, public sector and civil society to achieve common objectives. She also mentioned her concern for the feminization of poverty, reiterating that it is crucial for public policies to incorporate a gender perspective to promote justice and social inclusion.

Ambassador Lomellin underscored the importance of these dialogues because they allow the Member States to listen first hand to civil society’s principal needs and concerns. On another note, she recognized the work of Mr. Santiago Canton, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), in the promotion and protection of human rights in the region over the past ten years and expressed her gratitude on behalf of the Government of the United States.

Mr. Jose Crespo Fernandez, Director General of Multilateral Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bolivia, recognized that the dialogues with civil society make sense when the States assume the recommendations of the diverse actors and incorporate them into the Organization’s agenda. Furthermore, he underscored that the proposals of the workers are fundamental to guide the policies of the States; he called for States to face the monopolies and oligopolies in the communications sector because they infringe on freedom of expression. With respect to the topic of the XLII General Assembly, he referred to the definition of “food sovereignty” adopted during the World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in 2010, where 35,000 people from more than 100 countries participated in representation of civil society and workers organizations; and he expressed that his country’s position arose from civil society’s recommendations that emanated from this Conference.

Lastly, Mr. Crespo assured that his delegation will continue to work on the draft American Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples until its adoption is achieved, and he joined the concern for the commodification of education, ensuring that the Bolivian State will work to improve free, public education. In addition, he indicated that although it is significant that the private sector has taken on the topic of food sovereignty and understands that it is possible for food security to accompany food sovereignty, the inclusion of the topic of biotechnology is worrisome for Bolivia. He also underscored that the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2013 as International Year of the Quinoa.

Ambassador Jose de Jesus Martinez, Alternate Representative of Panama to the OAS, thanked the representatives of civil society, workers, private sector and other social actors for their interventions and recognized that the activities in this ambit strengthen the States and the Organization, and that their recommendations and suggestions are of great value. He underlined and joined the earlier comments by civil society in reference to democracy as a fundamental element for the full exercise of human rights, and emphasized the need to guarantee freedom of expression, pronouncing that it is a duty of the delegations to receive the recommendations and give them the due consideration.

Similarly, in reference to the topic of the XLII General Assembly, the Representative of Panama held that promoting food and nutritional security is needed to achieve complete development, and he reiterated the importance of establishing a more coherent and effective food security regulatory system, including
rules and mechanisms that ensure adequate income to farmers; mobilize investment in agricultural infrastructure and access to inputs; and the importance of creating early reaction mechanisms in moments of food crises. Finally, he considered that augmenting food production, improving its distribution, and reducing prices while respecting the environment, are the greatest challenges the hemisphere faces to eradicate hunger and achieve an effective food security.

**Ambassador Roy Chaderton Matos, Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the OAS**, expressed his delegation’s concern regarding the lack of transparency, representativeness, and clear succession mechanisms of certain civil society organizations; the sources of their resources; and the hate messages that they transmit through the media dictatorship toward States that are democratically-elected by the people. He noted that these messages complicate the public debate. Similarly, he expressed his regret that human rights defenders have been substituted for human rights bureaucrats and academics, perverting traditional democracy.

Upon concluding the first round of Member States’ interventions, Vice Minister Alurralde of the Plurinational State of Bolivia offered the floor again to the private sector, workers and civil society representatives to present their recommendations.

**INTERVENTIONS BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

**Mr. Luis Stein, Vice President of the Federación de Asociaciones de Latinoamérica, el Caribe y España y Portugal de Entidades de Tecnologías de la Información (ALETI)**, underlined that topics such as innovation, entrepreneurship, association and best practices in technology, are fundamental for our region. He held that the Federation has the utmost interest in collaborating with different governments on public policies in favor of development. He mentioned an example of a small and medium enterprise that invented a water filter capable of filtering 35 liters of water in five minutes, for a value of approximately US$100, utilizing the amount of energy of a 100-watt light bulb. He expressed that the quantity of food consumed by a person does not matter if that person is not healthy, and that the nutrients will not be digested and incorporated into the body. For that reason, this type of technological innovation has the capability of changing lives, above all for those people of lesser resources. In reference to technologies, he stated that they serve as a tool for the development of collaborative and participatory work, and that it is necessary for the States to work on public policies in this field. Additionally, he stressed that it is vital to reduce the digital gap in the countries with a view to improve education, communications and the use of technology. Finally, he stated that it is necessary for governments to advance public policies aimed at the incorporation of ICT practices.

**Mr. John Craig, Representative of the Comisión Empresarial de Asesoramiento Técnico en Asuntos Laborales (CEATAL)**, expressed his thanks for the opportunity to present his comments regarding the important topic of food security with sovereignty, and commented that he would offer the perspective of the employer, focusing on the need to guarantee access to water and safe, sufficient and nutritious food as a prerequisite to achieving food security and sovereignty. Moreover, he mentioned that the definition of food security adopted for the Declaration of Cochabamba should be broadened because it leaves out which tools are needed for its achievement. He added that food insecurity is linked to poverty, the scarcity of resources and the lack of governance. The structural challenges of the region must be changed to confront these issues. On a similar note, he affirmed that public policies that guarantee and reinforce food security in the region are necessary, and asserted that job creation from the private sector is essential to reduce poverty and ensure food security.
Mr. Craig highlighted three fundamental observations to ensure access to an appropriate diet: first, the existence of a formal economy that fosters economic development in the private sector; second, the availability of decent social services provided by the States (clean, sanitary water and education); third, a formal economy that generates food stability, assuring that all communities have sufficient access to food at every moment, regardless of conditions (crisis, cyclical, environmental or seasonal economic changes). Based on these observations, he proposed for Member States to reform regulations on private sector investment and modernize laws so they can work jointly toward job creation. Furthermore, he acknowledged that food regulations and inspections should be created, because if food products are not adequate for consumption, the price and accessibility of these outputs are not relevant.

INTERVENTIONS BY WORKERS REPRESENTATIVES

During her intervention, Ms. Maria del Carmen Gonzalez, representative of the Vice President of the Consejo Sindical de Asesoramiento Técnico (COSATE), and of the Confederación Sindical de las Américas y de la Central Obrera Boliviana, presented to the Heads of Delegation the document “Instrument of Sustainable Development with Social and Environmental Justice” as a result of the workers’ meetings. Ms. Gonzalez mentioned that family and peasant farming constitute the most important elements for feeding our peoples. In this sense, family farming generates greater manpower in the field and supports food sovereignty. The representative suggested that food scarcity is not what causes food crises, but rather speculation, for which she asked the delegations to implement State policies that take note of regulations to the food markets, preventing them from becoming the subject of speculation. Additionally, she requested specifying the right to food, as recognized in the OAS Declaration and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on Food Security: a Priority for the Inter-American Social Protection Network.

Similarly, Ms. Gonzalez urged the necessity to promote decent work in the agriculture sector since the rural sector is where there is a greater prevalence of forced child labor and extreme forms of slave labor; sustaining that the labor laws that apply to the agriculture sector are distressing because its laborers are affected by the temporary nature of their employment and the instability of their income. For this reason, she recommended the implementation of a minimum wage in the rural sector and emphasized the role of the State in elaborating policies that ensure food security. On the same note, she demanded the governments to state a clear and profound commitment in the United Nations Rio+20 Conference, aimed at the development of concrete and viable actions for sustainable development and not for a green economy. Lastly, she underscored the issue of fair transition, establishing environmental governance in benefit of sustainable models that guarantee the transition toward a low carbon-emission economy.

Mr. Adolfo Montolla Gordillo, of the Sección Obrera Boliviana and in representation of the Confederación Sindical de las Américas (CSA), made reference to the need to implement agrarian reform and State policies oriented toward promoting family and peasant farming. He emphasized the need to build a productive structure that incentivizes a stronger economy for farmers, and to renew traditional agricultural practices to reduce the dependence on pesticides. He commended that alternative farming policies should be linked to democratization of land ownership and the promotion of economic cooperation. On another note, he stressed that a greater public investment in science and technology training is necessary, in addition to the financing of small businesses. Moreover, he highlighted that the States should boost normative policies that limit the transfer of land rights to foreign entities. He demanded respect for human rights and the rights of workers, lamenting the
penalization of union activity. Finally, he called for the elimination of economic models that seek the economic accumulation of a few at the cost of low salaries, and at the cost of hunger and misery of the workers.

INTERVENTION BY THE YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

Ms. Monica Orellana, representative of the youth of Bolivia that participated in the Youth Dialogue held in the National Talent and Innovation Competition (TIC Bolivia) organized by the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT), expressed that during the mentioned Dialogue, the participants presented the Youth Declaration adopted by in the VI Summit of the Americas. She highlighted that young people are partners for prosperity and urged the governments to engage in a dialogue with the youth in a more strategic manner. She requested support from the governments in the coordination of different local and international efforts to create a greater awareness of the resources available. In addition, she emphasized the need to promote access to technology and information, and the instruments that derive from ICTs so as to allow access to information. Similarly, she encouraged governments, the private sector, civil society and other social actors to keep youth in mind in their processes. Finally, she thanked the Organization of American States, the YABT and the Plurinational State of Bolivia for carrying out the TIC Bolivia, and recognized that it is an important program as it allows for an entrepreneurial mentality among young people.

INTERVENTION BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

In his intervention, Mr. Hugo Tacuri Huamani, of the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Perú (CONAIP - Perú) and on behalf of indigenous peoples, commented that the Organization of American States must open its doors to indigenous peoples and reminded the Heads of Delegation that indigenous populations have inhabited the region since ancestral times. He argued that although they are citizens of the current States, they are not civil society and they unequivocally reject the OAS position to register them as members of civil society to participate in its negotiations. Moreover, he underscored that some States constitutionally recognize that indigenous peoples have the right to autonomous governance within their territories. The indigenous peoples are not simply ordinary citizens, and therefore must be granted rights beyond those of the general public because they have their own cultural identity with a different view of life from the Western conception. He held that this must be recognized and legitimized in the OAS. Moreover, he emphasized the need to multiply States’ efforts to participate in the redaction of the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and provide financial support to guarantee its conclusion. He requested the States to work toward its prompt approval during the General Assembly, in addition to the approval of the Social Charter, bearing in mind the development of these rights in the constitutions and laws of the people of the Americas and guaranteeing that the declaration incorporates the “right of indigenous peoples to their own conception of life” as a political and juridical concept. He proposed this as the topic of the next General Assembly and the opening of separate spaces to ensure the participation of indigenous peoples in the deliberations of the Organization, and reinforcing the Inter-American Human Rights System. He finished his intervention by addressing the delegation of Peru, presenting his petition to end the deaths of indigenous peoples in territories where there is foreign investment.

INTERVENTIONS BY CIVIL SOCIETY
Ms. Laura Estefania Jerez Mansilla of the Organización de Transexuales por la Dignidad de la Diversidad (OTD) presented the recommendations of the civil society organizations on gender, women and sexual and reproductive rights. With respect to the theme of the XLII General Assembly, she highlighted that the claim of the right to food sovereignty implies that the States also must guarantee a life free of violence and discrimination because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, racial ethnicity, economic condition, disability, age or any other condition, expressing that this aspiration is out of reach of millions of people who suffer everyday when their rights are violated. Adding to this, she urged the Heads of Delegation to design public policies that consider the diversity present in society, with a gender and human rights focus. She also suggested creating a working group within the OAS to investigate the current state of the situation of sexual and reproductive rights in the countries of CARICOM, Central America, South America and North America.

Additionally, she called on States to guarantee the right of women to make decisions about their own bodies, including abortion and its complete decriminalization, and for States to comply with the international commitments established in favor of the defense of the rights of women in documents such as the Convention of Belem do Para. She also requested strengthening the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and consolidating a human rights protection system that strengthens the OAS and IAHRS institutions. Lastly, she urged the States to foment public policies that favor comprehensive sex education and the approval in the short term of a resolution and the adoption of an Inter-American Convention on Sexual and Reproductive Rights.

On behalf of the LGBTTTI Coalition, Ms. Rayza Torriani García of the Mesa de Trabajo Nacional de las Poblaciones Clave (MTN), expressed concern that food security is limited to the right to food, and omits its relation to the right to work, health, housing, education, equality and non-discrimination, a decent life, respect for nature and collective rights of indigenous peoples; for the situation of exclusion and vulnerability experienced by lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals, transgender, transvestites and intersex people, as well as Afro-descendants, migrants, refugees, women, youth, persons of different types of abilities, older persons, ethnic groups, persons living with HIV, religious minorities, and those that live in armed conflict situations, disasters and catastrophe, who are exposed to greater discrimination under these circumstances, impeding their access to a good quality of life; and because intersex and trans persons, whose identity is not recognized, are not priority subjects in the design of public policies and States do not guarantee their rights or protect their lives.

Subsequently, she called on the Member States to pay more attention to laws dealing with the LGBTTTI topic in the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, and suggested adopting legislation and public policies in accordance with the commitments assumed in the resolutions “Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity” approved by prior General Assemblies, as well as laws that recognize the right to identity of trans people. She highlighted the recently approved law in the Argentine Republic as a good practice. Similarly, she urged the abolition of laws that penalize relationships between persons of the same sex and asked the States to work toward the approval of the Draft Inter-American Convention against Racism and all Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance. In conclusion, she urged the approval of the draft resolution on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity presented by the delegation of Brazil, and reminded the Member States’ representatives that vulnerable groups are not born that way, but rather become vulnerable when they are not recognized.

At the end of the second round of interventions by the representatives of civil society, workers, private sector and other social actors, the floor was offered to the Heads of Delegation of the Member States to refer to the recommendations presented.
INTERVENTIONS BY THE MEMBER STATES

Ambassador Luis Menendez Leal, Interim Representative of El Salvador to the OAS, took note of the proposals made during the Dialogue and stated that the government of El Salvador, in its five-year development plan, establishes family agriculture as central to its nutrition policy strategies and that rural job creation and access to food are vital. He emphasized that the national authorities maintain their links with the private sector, civil society and workers in order to strengthen food security, which is crucial to development. Ambassador Menendez mentioned that the conclusions of the Dialogue would be considered in the context of the decisions and mandates adopted by the General Assembly. He encouraged continued exchanges between civil society and States at the national level, also assuring that his government is open to discussions with a view to formulating and refining participatory and legitimate public policies that take into account factors such as gender and cross-cutting criteria.

Ambassador Andres Gonzalez Diaz, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the OAS, acknowledged civil society participation as vital because it strengthens democracies in the region. Furthermore, he highlighted that the participation in the Summit of the Americas in Cartagena and the unbreakable will of the OAS to continue working and creating permanent ties with these representatives. Regarding the rights of workers, the Permanent Representative of Colombia indicated that his government does not accept nor does it tolerate persecution against unions, since freedom of association and of unions, and the jurisdiction of the workers are untouchable. Whoever violates these rights faces legal sanctions in accordance with Colombian legislation. He added that his government makes important efforts to offer special protection to nearly 1,400 union leaders and that the Attorney General of the Nation has increased the number of attorneys that investigate and sanction any type of abuse to workers’ rights. Furthermore, in reference to the Inter-American System, Ambassador Gonzalez urged the States to persevere in the task of continuing to strengthen the charter of rights and national justices, confronting impunity to prevent the violation of rights, and he asserted that the Working Group of the OAS Permanent Council headed by Mexico seeks consensus among the Member States so as to ensure the strengthening of the IAHRS. Similarly, he emphasized that none of the decisions or restrictive interpretations that could undermine the scope or the capacity of the rapporteurships and of the press would be considered in Colombia. He held that to reach adequate growth to defeat poverty, cooperation among groups of workers, the private sector and the States is necessary in order to improve and increase production and achieve food security. Ambassador Gonzalez Diaz commented that there should be structural changes in land holdings, and that his country is working on the implementation of a new land law that includes more than one million people affected by violence and displacement.

Ambassador Pablo Tettamanti, Director of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Argentine Republic, thanked civil society, private business and workers for their interventions and the government of Bolivia for its proposal of the theme of the XLII General Assembly. He reiterated that each State must be able to decide on its food policies independently to guarantee food security for its people. He highlighted that in many developing countries, protectionism has greatly affected access to markets and that subsidies have generated unfair competition, which provokes a negative impact on the production of added value and on investments.

Ambassador Tettamanti mentioned that Latin America and the Caribbean must be at the vanguard in food production and focused on three ideas that summarize the position of his delegation. First, to achieve food security, agriculture must be based on economic, social and ecological sustainability, for
which it is necessary to strengthen incentives for producers, especially small farmers and stimulate the discussion on the legal frameworks in relation to the commercialization of food and regulations, to sanction financial speculation and to be able to control price volatility. Second, the creation and transfer of technology is fundamental, in addition to sharing knowledge not only at the national level, but also between countries through the exchange of best practices through South-South cooperation processes. Finally, he underscored the importance of promoting and protecting the sectors of society in vulnerable situations, including affirmative action aimed at eradicating all forms of discrimination because of race, color, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, language, religion, political ideas, persons with disabilities, or age.

Finally, the Representative of Argentina asked the private sector companies to include corporate social responsibility as an essential part of their business strategy to create sustainable prosperity and he thanked the workers for alerting the delegations about the significance of speculation and not scarcity as the cause of the food crisis, as well as the importance of promoting decent work, especially among rural laborers who are the population whose rights are most violated due to the prevalence of child labor, the persistence of forced labor and the absence and incompliance with labor laws. He held that the development of policies for property transfers to prevent their internationalization is necessary.

Ambassador Denis Ronald Moncada Colindres, Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the OAS, acknowledged the contributions of the different social actors to the discussion of the central theme of the General Assembly and recalled that this arose as a preoccupation about the food crisis that increased worldwide in 2008. He also mentioned that the Government of Reconciliation and National Unity of Nicaragua assumed a presidential mandate in 2007 and established the National Human Development Plan in consultation with the Nicaraguan people that includes food security and sovereignty and defines strategic lines for public policies on this matter.

The Permanent Representative of Nicaragua underscored the role of the workers, particularly those that participate in the food production chain, stressing the tireless work of peasants, laborers, indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, and especially women as the nucleus of the family and society. He assured that his government continues working in partnership with the workers and private sector to promote the development of small- and medium-sized businesses, implementing and executing inclusive policies that contribute to the integral development of the nation. On the same note, Ambassador Moncada Colindres highlighted that partnerships for cooperation and complementarity of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America / People’s Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP) have been very important to stimulate these strategies. He reiterated that Nicaragua is gradually and decisively reducing the poverty gap in broad sectors of historically marginalized communities. In relation to the recommendations by the indigenous peoples, he asserted that his government will continue working toward the approval of the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Ambassador Neil Parsan, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the OAS, commented that he is convinced the dialogue with civil society and social actors is indispensable and thanked those present for their participation in OAS activities. Similarly, he assured that his delegation would analyze the recommendations and propose viable strategies to address the problems included in the General Assembly’s agenda. Ambassador Parsan indicated that the topic of food security is crucial for his country and that a multi-pronged response has been given based on inter-ministerial and inter-institutional consultations and collaboration. He further shared with the participants that agriculture and food security are one of the five central elements for the 2011-2014 period in Trinidad and Tobago.
In reference to the private sector interventions, the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago recognized the importance of public-private partnerships to promote sustainable agricultural growth in the countries of the region. For this reason, he commented that his country facilitates the work of businesses, creating opportunities for multinational companies, and the signing of bilateral trade agreements. Finally, he reiterated his government’s commitment to strengthen the dialogue with businesses to improve the socioeconomic well-being of the population.

Ambassador Jacinth L. Henry-Martin, Permanent Representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis to the OAS, expressed that food security in her country is constantly impacted by threats such as natural disasters, the degradation of ocean resources, the feminization of poverty, as well as the growing inflation of world food and hydrocarbon prices. She expressed her gratitude for the recommendations from a proactive civil society, highlighting that they contribute to facing the region’s challenges. She highlighted civil society’s commitment in the interaction processes with the Organization, and the scope of the topics addressed in their interventions, ensuring that they would be considered by the highest-level officials of her government. Similarly, she congratulated the youth for their active participation and for the magnitude of their recommendations, and she commented that she feels reassured knowing that the future of such a difficult topic is in their hands.

Minister Carlos Henrique Moojen de Abreu e Silva, Director General of the Department of the United States, Canada and Inter-American Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, recognized that Brazilian civil society, primarily through the National Council on Food Security and Nutrition, has actively participated in the development and monitoring of public policies in the country. He underlined the Law on Food Security and Nutrition in Brazil and commented that his country has launched a national food security plan that links all bodies of the government with a set of guidelines to be complied with by 2015. These guidelines seek to support initiatives that promote food sovereignty responding to the proposals offered by the workers during the meeting, as well as the human right to food as requested by civil society to the General Assembly. With respect to technological innovation and in response to the private sector, Minister Moojen de Abreu e Silva assured that Brazil boosts innovation in the agricultural sector to improve farming productivity. He also reiterated his government’s commitment to the fight against all forms of discrimination for gender, race and sexual orientation in his country, and its commitment to continue with the approval of the draft American Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Ambassador Leonidas Rosa Bautista, Permanent Representative of Honduras to the OAS, underscored that civil society’s contributions constitute important input for the deliberations and consensus of the General Assembly, and they are an essential part of the Inter-American System. He referred particularly to the statements by the representatives of the workers’ organizations with respect to security in his country, pointing out that violence is a general phenomenon that enrages Central American citizens and that regrettably impacts the lives of valuable journalists and workers. He affirmed that Honduras and the rest of the Central American region, through SICA, have assumed the challenge of dealing with the structural causes of violence and insecurity, and he invited the international community to join the common cause against this scourge.

Ambassador Carlos Raul Morales, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, expressed his pleasure with participating in the dialogue with civil society where they can listen to the valuable ideas, experiences and contributions of the organizations, and he stressed that their work is essential for development. He stated that one of Guatemala’s principal objectives deals with the topics of poverty and inequality, for which emphasizing food security is of utmost importance to his country. Ambassador
Morales indicated his agreement with prioritizing the indigenous and Ladino segments of the population that are found in conditions of poverty through concerted action of the State, the market, academia, civil society, municipalities, families and community networks. He expressed that this objective is being addressed by means of five important programs. The Zero Hunger Agreement is one of the most important for his government, through which he assured that adequate food is available at accessible prices for all people. He also mentioned other programs such as Food Assistance, Healthy Homes, Prepared Children, Young Protagonists, and Safe Families, that have been designed for this purpose.

The Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala pointed out that the success of social development will be to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities with a view to converting the participants of the programs into people that do not depend on the support, assistance and paternity of the State to move forward. He reiterated that the government of Guatemala does not allow or tolerate union persecution; however, he lamented that cases have existed in which union leaders have died as a product of the violence that has affected the region. Finally, he emphasized the launching of the Security, Justice and Peace Pact that looks to provide security to all of Guatemalan society.

In the last intervention, Minister Raul Salazar Cosio, Alternate Representative of Peru to the OAS, commented that his country has a policy of social inclusion and high economic growth, but never at the expense of any sector of its population, but rather in favor of all citizens. He commented that his government supports and co-sponsors Bolivia’s proposal that the Chachado be considered a cultural practice of the Andean region, and its willingness to strengthen the Declaration of Cochabamba. He indicated that no settler in Peru is executed or assassinated, and no sector of the population is in a situation of vulnerability. The human rights violations occurred in a context of terror from the past in which indigenous populations bore much of the suffering, as the Truth Commission recognized. He underscored that Peru is a deeply mestizo country, that does not cut off parts of its own body, but seeks to be one single nation.

Minister Salazar Cosio affirmed that in his country social protest is not criminalized, given that it is a constitutional right protected by Peruvian legislation. Similarly, he highlighted the role of Peru in the negotiations of the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the United Nations and that his delegation supports the adoption of a similar document in the Organization. He acknowledged being one of the only countries that has passed a prior consultation law and its guidelines, and assured those present that there will be no exploitation of mines without first consulting with social permits and that all decisions by the State have the objective of searching for the common good, never at the expense of the environment, much less at the expense of indigenous peoples.

At the end of the Dialogue, the OAS Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Albert Ramdin, thanked and congratulated all those present for their participation and suggestions, and recognized that it had been an exciting encounter between Heads of Delegation and members of civil society, from which excellent initiatives emanated that allow us to address the hemispheric challenges, while also reaffirming the essential role civil society plays within the Organization. The Assistant Secretary General underscored that maintaining peace and security, economic growth and prosperity requires the active participation of civil society, workers and the private sector because States cannot assume these responsibilities alone.

Furthermore, he assured that the Organization will continue the work it carries out with civil society, not only during the Dialogues, but also through all of the spaces that have been opened to their participation in the OAS, ensuring that their voices are heard and are reflected in the policies the
Organization adopts. Finally, he thanked the Plurinational State of Bolivia for the initiative and the efforts made to achieve successful meeting.