



Sistema de Integración Centroamericana

Establishment: December 13, 1991, by the signing of the Protocol to the Charter of the Organization of Central American States (ODECA).

Secretary General: Juan Daniel Alemán Gurián

Member States: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. The Dominican Republic is an associated State.

Observers: Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, the United States of America, China (Taiwan), Spain, Germany, Italy, Japan, Australia, South Korea, France, the Holy See.

Areas of Work: Democracy, security, sustainable development, regional integration, human rights.

Areas of Cooperation with the OAS:

Address of Headquarters: Final Bulevar Cancillería, Distrito El Espino,
Ciudad Merliot, Antiguo Cuscatlán, La Libertad, El Salvador,

Website: <http://www.sica.int>

BACKGROUND

The Central American Integration System (SICA) is the institutional framework for regional integration in Central America.

The modern history of Central American integration began on October 14th 1951, when Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama, created the Organization of Central American States (Spanish acronym ODECA). The Organization reached significant achievements and established the bases for the region's economic, social and political integration.

With the adoption of the Tegucigalpa Protocol to the Charter of the Organization of Central American States (ODECA), during the early 90s, SICA was created, representing the political and institutional framework for the integration process.

The SICA initiative was widely supported by the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution A/48 L of December 10, 1993), with the Tegucigalpa Protocol being duly registered with the UN, allowing SICA's regional bodies and institutions to interact with the United Nations System.

The System was designed taking into account past attempts for regional unification as well as internal constitutional transformations and the existence of democratic regimes in the region. The integration concept proposed in the Tegucigalpa Protocol and embodied by SICA, includes several areas of human activity, complementing each other while promoting synergies. This systemic process, which was reaffirmed by the Sustainable Development Alliance, consists of four main pillars: political, social-cultural, economic, and the sustainable management of natural resources.

OBJECTIVES

- To consolidate democracy and strengthen its institutions based on the existence of governments elected by universal, free and secret suffrage, and on the unrestricted respect for human rights.
- To set up a new model of regional security based on the reasonable balance of forces, the strengthening of civilian authority, the overcoming of extreme poverty, the promotion of sustainable development, the protection of the environment, and the eradication of violence, corruption, terrorism, and drug and arms trafficking.
- To promote a broad regime of freedom to ensure the full and harmonious development of the human person and of society as a whole.
- Promote, in a harmonious and balanced way, the sustained economic, social, cultural and political development of Member States and the region as a whole.
- To achieve a regional system of economic and social justice for the peoples of Central America.
- To attain economic union and strengthen the Central American financial system.
- To strengthen the region as an economic bloc in order to insert it successfully into the international economy.
- To reaffirm and consolidate the self-determination of Central America as it pertains to the region's external relations, through a single strategy to strengthen and expand the participation of the region as a whole in the international arena.
- Establish concerted actions directed toward the preservation of the environment through respect and harmony with nature, ensuring the balanced development and rational exploitation of natural resources of the area, with a view to establishing a New Ecological Order in the region.
- To constitute the Central American Integration System based on a legal and institutional order and mutual respect among Member States.

GOVERNING BODIES

MEETING OF PRESIDENTS

The supreme body of the SICA is the Meeting of Presidents, composed by the Presidents of the Member States. It meets every six months and extraordinarily meetings may be convened as necessary to address regional matters in the field of democracy, development, liberty, peace and security.

The Meeting defines and guide Central American policy, establishing regional integration guidelines as well as the necessary provisions to guarantee the coordination and harmonization of the activities of the bodies and institutions of the area, and verification, control and follow-up of their mandates and decisions.

It is also in charge of strengthening the regional identity in the context of the consolidation of a united Central America, ensuring fulfillment of Agreements, Covenants and Protocols that make up the legal framework of the Central American Integration System, and decide on the admission of new Member States

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Provides the necessary follow-up to ensure the effective implementation of the decisions adopted by the Meeting of Presidents in the sector in which it is competent, and to prepare the topics for possible discussions by the Meeting. It is chaired by the competent minister of the Member State speaking on behalf of Central America – again for a 6-month period. The coordinating body is to be the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, competent for all political matters – democratization, peacemaking and regional security, for the coordination and follow-up in respect of political decisions and measures in the economic, social and cultural sectors as well as for approving the budget of the central organization.

The Protocol makes special reference to the “Council of Ministers responsible for economic integration and regional development” responsible for implementing the decisions of the Meeting of Presidents concerning economic integration, and fostering economic policies geared towards regional integration. The Executive Committee (CE-SICA)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

This permanent organ is a hybrid body, composed of representatives of Member States, appointed by their Presidents through the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The Executive Committee is chaired by the representative of the host country where the last Regular Meeting of Presidents was held. It meets once a week and has a wide range of tasks including the effective implementation of the decisions of the Meeting of Presidents, compliance with the provisions of the Protocol, prepare, evaluate and submit proposals to the Council of Ministers, among other matters.

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

The General Secretariat is the coordinating entity of the SICA. As such, it provides services and technical and executive capabilities in support of the regional integration efforts, aimed to implement initiatives

of the Meeting of Presidents and Councils of Ministers, and to promote participation of the civil society, communication and information for sustainable development and also international cooperation. The Presidency of the General Secretariat rotates every six months among the Member States. The Secretary General is appointed by the Meeting of Presidents for a period of four years.

SECRETARY GENERAL



Juan Daniel Alemán Gurdíán

Doctor Alemán was elected in 2009 for a four-year term. He has held several important public sector positions; among them Assistant Secretary General at the Central American Economic Integration System, SICA's economic arm, where he was responsible for relations with European Union.

Doctor Alemán also served as Political Secretary of the Presidency of the Republic of Guatemala, and played an important role in the development of the SICA concept. He has taught in several Central American universities, and participated in seminars in London and Nice, dealing with development issues among others.

Dr. Alemán holds a Ph.D in International Law from Universidad de Navarra, Spain. His dissertation, "Central American Common Market: Evolution and Legal and Institutional Revision", received the distinction of "Summa Cum Laude." In 1980 he obtained a Degree in Legal and Social Sciences from Universidad Rafael Landívar in Guatemala. His thesis was a study of Central American integration; it proposed, from a legal perspective, the creation of regional industrial development enterprises as a response to the El Salvadoran demographic problem.

COOPERATION WITH OAS

Cooperation Agreements

- General Cooperation Agreement: On May 26, 1994, the General Secretariats of the OAS and SICA signed a Cooperation Agreement
- Addendum to the General Cooperation Agreement: A two-day consultation between the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Central American Integration System (SICA) began in October 20, 2008, laying the basis for deeper cooperation, through an addendum to a 1994 general cooperation agreement between the secretariats.

"The central elements of this addendum will be a reviewable cooperation program and a joint management mechanism between the [SICA] General Secretariat and ourselves so that we can monitor progress in the collaboration," explained OAS Assistant Secretary General Albert R. Ramdin, who chaired the formal opening of consultations.

"Central America, as a region, has a lot that it can teach us," added OAS Secretary General Insulza, who also held a separate meeting with the SICA Secretary General. Insulza noted as well that the Central America region enjoys an "exemplary" relationship with the OAS. The technical part of the OAS-SICA meeting involved comprehensive participation from technical units from both organizations.

The addendum was signed on February 12, 2010 and called for the parties to develop a program of mutual cooperation in the areas of support to the Central America security strategy, State modernization and institutional development, citizen participation, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters, and multidimensional security, among others.

- **Supplementary Agreement:** On February 12, 2010 the General Secretariats of the OAS and SICA signed a supplementary agreement for the exchange of experiences and knowledge regarding the information systems used in both organizations for the fulfillment of their respective mandates.

The agreement aimed to harmonize and reinforce the capacities of both entities to provide Member States with useful and effective tools in the follow-up of mandates negotiated at the presidential Summits. By providing greater efficiency in the processing of information and the systematization of results, the follow-up systems will serve as useful tools in promoting greater transparency and effectiveness in the follow-up process.

Meetings (recent)

- **Meeting of the Secretary General of the OAS and the Secretary General of SICA:** On September 21, 2012 the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), José Miguel Insulza, met at OAS headquarters with the Secretary General of the Central American Integration System (SICA), Juan Daniel Alemán, to review the democratic security agenda in which the two organizations share many common points.

During the meeting, Secretary Alemán discussed the progress made on the 22 projects of the Central American security strategy, focusing primarily on eight projects identified by the Central American Security Commission. They also discussed the fight against crime, efforts to prevent violence, institutional strengthening and issues of rehabilitation and social reintegration. Alemán also referred to one of the most important achievements of the SICA, the upcoming launch of the SICA Observatory and Democratic Security Index (OBSICA), which aims to track indicators of democratic security and the problems of violence in Central America.

SICA's Secretary General said that the meeting revolved around the need to "create more synergy and exchange experiences and best practices with the OAS," noting that Insulza offered the full support of the organization and invited them to participate at the meeting of the Strategy Monitoring Committee, which "enriches and strengthens its presence in the body."

On the other hand, the SICA Democratic Security Director, Erick Vílchez, said that they also discussed the Border Security Project and the Project for the Control of Small Arms in Central America, as well as the importance of coordinating efforts on the issue of gangs. "We can say that this opens a new area of cooperation between the two secretariats - OAS and SICA – in search of greater peace, security and stability in the countries of Central America," said Vílchez.

The leaders also discussed deepening the cooperation between the programs of the OAS and the Central American Security Strategy so that they complement each other and to make the SICA-OAS relationship a concrete reality with greater potential.

- **CIFTA Meeting:** On September 28, 2011, SICA and the OAS organized a meeting in San Salvador to assess the legislative progress to prevent and combat the illicit trade of firearms in Central America, which was attended by all the states party to the Inter-American Convention against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms (CIFTA).
- **Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Honduras and Nicaragua:** In 2000, SICA offered its headquarters in San Salvador as the venue for a meeting of the foreign ministers of Honduras and Nicaragua with the Special Representative of the OAS Secretary General, as part of the efforts of the Special Representative to ease tensions which had developed between the two countries as a result of a maritime dispute in the Caribbean Sea.

The meeting, held February 6-7, 2000, was the second such encounter organized pursuant to Permanent Council resolution CP/RES 757 (1216/99), which provided for the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary General who was entrusted to “evaluate the situation, facilitate dialogue, and formulate recommendations aimed at easing tension and preventing acts that could affect peace in the Hemisphere.” The staff and facilities of SICA which were provided to support the OAS’ efforts, in particular the advice provided by SICA’s Secretary General at the time, Ernesto Leal, greatly facilitated the positive outcome of the meeting.

Main Cooperation Activities:

- **Address of OAS Assistant Secretary General to Central American Foreign Ministers in El Salvador:** On July 24, 2011 the Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Ambassador Albert Ramdin, urged Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Central American Integration System (SICA) to persevere in their efforts to strengthen relations between Central America and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), in the face of common challenges to both regions.

According to Assistant Secretary General Ramdin, "On matters of security, trade and investment, natural disasters, climate change and other issues, the need for cooperation and coordination has been magnified. Common challenges have provided unique opportunities to strengthen relations and promote cooperation. The challenge is to move ahead with tangible ways to strengthen political, economic and cultural relations".

- **First Mesoamerican Basin Forum 2010:** The OAs and SICA were co-organizers of this event, held in San Jose Costa Rica on May 4-7, 2010. This Forum was a gathering of experts on the subject of aquifers and sought to produce inputs for the study of trans border aquifers in Mesoamerica.
- **Water Resource Management:** In cooperation with SICA’s Regional Committee on Hydraulic Resource (CRRH), the OAS developed a program on the relationship of water resource management issues with transportation and trade corridors, as well as other corridor initiatives in Central America.
- **General Assembly Resolution AG/RES. 1469 (XXVII-O/97):** the OAS General Assembly resolved to request the General Secretariat to prepare, in consultation with the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System, a biennial program of cooperation designed to strengthen the process of Central American integration and cooperation, within the framework of the

Agreement on Cooperative Relations and in close coordination with the programs of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, for approval and execution, within allocated resources approved in the program-budget and other resources.

- General Assembly Resolution AG/RES. 1371 (XXVI-O/96): the OAS General Assembly resolved to instruct the Secretary General to take appropriate measures to expand cooperation between the Organization of American States and the Central American Integration System (SICA) and between its specialized agencies and the integration institutions and to convene a meeting in 1996 to explore the most effective ways to do so.

SOURCES

Addendum to the General Cooperation Agreement between the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System (SICA)

www.oas.org

www.sica.org

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