

41st General Assembly of the OAS, San Salvador, 5-7 June 2011

REMARKS BY THE HEAD OF THE GERMAN DELEGATION

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Director-General for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Federal Foreign Office

Mr Chairman, Secretary General, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
it is a great honour for me to attend this 41st General Assembly of the Organization of
American States, representing Germany as an Observer.

Let me start by congratulating the OAS and its member states on recent
achievements and on its role in this impressive tradition in the Americas – the
tradition to overcome disagreements taking recourse to international law and
diplomatic means.

In this context, I should like to congratulate the OAS on its decision to readmit
Honduras to participate fully in the work of the organisation. As the EU High
Representative said on behalf of the European Union, we expect that national
reconciliation in Honduras together with her return to the OAS will also give renewed
impetus to regional integration efforts in Central America.

I should also like to congratulate the OAS on the successful joint OAS – CARICOM
Electoral observation Mission in Haiti which played an important role in these historic
elections.

The OAS has proven again that it is a successful forum for crisis prevention,
management of controversies and post-conflict peace-building in America.

Cooperation with the OAS is of special significance for Germany. We have had
observer status since 1972 and support the OAS efforts to foster stability by funding
projects.

I am pleased to announce that Germany increased her overall contributions to OAS projects by almost 50% in 2010 and currently is one of the six largest donors among the permanent observers.

Among others, the German Government has been providing one million Euro for the OAS Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia since 2008. The successful project in support of victims' groups has been extended in 2010 with Germany committing another 500.000 Euro.

Also in 2010, the decision was taken to support the Law and Identity Project PUICA ("Programa de Universalización de la Identidad Civil en las Américas") with 500.000 Euro.

Furthermore, we are cooperating with the OAS on strengthening the participation of indigenous peoples in the Inter-American System. Our contribution to the promotion of indigenous rights amounts to one million Euro overall.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have placed this 41st General Assembly under the headline "Citizen Security in the Americas".

Citizen Security is the oldest, the most basic deliverable a citizen expects from his state. At the same time, it is closely linked with justice, with human rights, with prosperity and with the preservation of democratic structures – values so important to the members of the OAS. Furthermore, Citizen Security is vital to the sustainable political, social and economic development of all countries. In its absence there can be no coherence in society, no trust in the political and judicial system or the public institutions, no reliable economic growth.

Some of you might be aware that the German Government has adopted a policy document on cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean last year. This Strategy paper clearly underlines the importance of cooperation in security issues.

Germany has constantly addressed security issues within the framework of both our bilateral and our regional cooperation programs, especially with Central American countries. Our bilateral projects focus on prevention of youth violence, the prevention of violence against women as well as on peace education and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. In concluding the meeting with SICA and the Group of Friends this morning, Secretary General Insulza underlined the importance of prevention. I should therefore like to highlight the project "Prevenir", a program, in which Germany works with SICA and the Governments of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala for this very purpose. Other German projects have been directed at institutional strengthening of the justice system as well as supporting regional efforts such as CICIG.

As all member states of the European Union, we are, of course also involved in projects under her auspices, for instance on joint border management as well as supporting the control and reduction of light weapons in the region.

Germany highly appreciates the growing awareness that an effort must be made to improve the overall security situation. We value the regional and multinational approach that has been proposed. The work that will be done here by the General Assembly of the OAS is also to be seen in context with the international conference on regional security that will soon be held in Guatemala City. I hope that the meeting here, together with the conference in Guatemala, will be the starting point for a fresh approach to effective and lasting cooperation in the field of citizen security in the Americas.

Thank you for your attention.