

CP/RES. 1151 (2280/20)

THE OAS RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC^{1/}

(Adopted by the Permanent Council at its virtual special meeting of April 16, 2020)

THE PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES,

EXPRESSING solidarity with and condolences to everyone in the Americas who is suffering the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those who have contracted the disease, those whose livelihoods have been affected by the crisis, and the families of those who have died of the disease;

VOICING its profound concern at the unprecedented impact of the pandemic on the societies and economies of the Americas, which has particularly affected health care systems, the productive, financial and service sectors, transport, logistics, trade, and multidimensional security;

EXPRESSING its profound gratitude and deep admiration for the key role of frontline health care workers, doctors, nurses, scientists and researchers, civil protection authorities, caregivers, as well as all essential personnel who are working in difficult and challenging circumstances, and stressing the need for adequate protection and support that these groups need to carry out their functions in the response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic;

EMPHASIZING that hemispheric solidarity and joint, coordinated action and cooperation can help slow and prevent the spread of COVID-19 and contribute to regional response and recovery efforts;

RECOGNIZING that the most vulnerable, especially those living in poverty and extreme poverty, are among the hardest hit by the pandemic, as well as the importance of considering differentiated approaches for all vulnerable populations and the need to address the increase of gender-based and other forms of domestic violence;

STRESSING that a comprehensive response to the pandemic depends upon access to required knowledge, freely accessible or sufficiently affordable for all affected societies, and that availability, accessibility, acceptability, and affordability of health products of assured quality will be important to tackling the pandemic;

1. The Permanent Mission of Belize submits on its own behalf and on behalf of the Permanent Missions of Barbados, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, the Commonwealth of Dominica, El Salvador, ...

ACKNOWLEDGING efforts to facilitate favorable credit conditions, alleviate fiscal challenges, and provide member states with the necessary financial capacity to deal with the pandemic and ensure resources for economic reactivation, bearing in mind the realities of middle-income countries and small-island developing States;

RECOGNIZING the work and initiatives of member states and of regional and subregional organizations to address the collective and multidimensional challenges of this pandemic, including its economic, financial, and food-security consequences; the need for better coordination of technical and cooperation efforts for enhanced exchange and sharing of relevant information, as well as for access to medicines, treatments, vaccines and equipment, and the required scientific and technical knowledge, and to find mechanisms to make resources available to address the unprecedented challenges ahead;

REITERATING the commitment of the Hemisphere to transparency, democratic principles, and full respect for human rights, as enshrined in the Charter of the Organization of American States and all relevant inter-American instruments;

AFFIRMING the role of the Organization of American States and other organs and agencies of the inter-American system in assisting member states in their efforts to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and underscoring the need to bolster resilience in the wake of the crisis, as well as its recognition of the role of the Pan American Health Organization;

TAKING NOTE of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in the context of the pandemic, including its resolution 1/2020 “Pandemic and Human Rights in The Americas”;

TAKING NOTE ALSO of the Practical Guide to Inclusive Rights-Focused Responses to COVID-19 in the Americas;

RECALLING that the spirit of prompt and effective cooperation benefitting health conditions in the Americas has been present since the inception of the inter-American system and that the importance of providing all means and assistance for the study and research of epidemic diseases in the Hemisphere has been historically recognized; and

EMPHASIZING that the extreme circumstances of the pandemic require all in the Americas to enhance our cooperation, in a spirit of solidarity and mutual support,

RESOLVES:

1. To unite in a hemispheric response to the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, driven by democratic leadership, cooperation and solidarity among member states and inter-American entities to mitigate the adverse impacts and accelerate the recovery.
2. To strengthen hemispheric cooperation and solidarity to contain, mitigate, and defeat the pandemic and its consequences, including exchanging information, scientific knowledge, lessons learned, and best practices, with due regard to the differential impacts on all vulnerable groups and at-risk populations by enhancing health care and services.

3. To underscore the need to make the prevention of and response to gender-based violence a priority in all measures relating to COVID-19.

4. To reiterate the imperative that member states uphold democratic principles, ensure full respect for human rights and transparency, and prevent any form of discrimination, including racism and xenophobia, as they respond to the crisis.

5. To welcome efforts by the OAS General Secretariat and other relevant international and regional bodies to deploy available resources and to explore additional measures needed to respond to the crisis, facilitate regional action, and bolster economic resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. To request the OAS General Secretariat to continue working with all relevant actors to mobilize an appropriate hemispheric response to the pandemic in coordination with other relevant organizations of the inter-American system and at the subregional level, in order to enhance cooperation among member states, while avoiding duplication of efforts and ensuring the full participation of women at all levels in doing so.

7. To request the OAS General Secretariat to continue engaging relevant multilateral institutions under the Joint Summit Working Group in order to promote coordinated interinstitutional responses and to support national efforts of member states in addressing the social, economic, health and security impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

8. To instruct the OAS General Secretariat to optimize the use of existing forums, mechanisms, and resources to serve as a coordination platform to address the pandemic and its consequences.

9. To continue to address, as a matter of priority, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in its work and in preparation for the fiftieth regular session of the OAS General Assembly.

10. To request the Secretary General to report on the implementation of this resolution.

FOOTNOTE

1. ... Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, the following: “The resolution acknowledges the need for more favorable credit conditions for middle-income countries and small island developing states but does not acknowledge the largest impediment to accessing favorable financing. We call on the OAS to act in the best interest of its most vulnerable member states to support the appeal to all pertinent multilateral financial institutions to adapt conventional policies and repayment terms to the evolving extraordinary circumstances and, in so doing, alleviate the pressing needs of the middle-income and small developing countries, thereby taking into account, not only their GDP per capita, but their vulnerability in the face of this pandemic and vulnerabilities stemming from natural disasters, climate change, and external/exogenous economic shocks.”