



THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES OF AMERICAN STATES

1889-1928

A Collection of the Conventions, Recommendations, Resolutions, Reports, and Motions adopted by the First Six International Conferences of the American States, and Documents relating to the Organization of the Conferences

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FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF AMERICAN STATES

WASHINGTON

OCTOBER 2, 1889–APRIL 19, 1890

INVITATION TO THE CONFERENCE

CIRCULAR INSTRUCTION OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES
TO THE AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES ACCREDITED TO THE
GOVERNMENTS OF MEXICO, CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA, HAITI AND
SAN DÓMINGO¹

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, July 13, 1888.

SIR: At the present session of Congress an act was passed, to which the President's approval was given on the 24th of May last, by the terms of which the President is requested and authorized—

To invite the several Governments of the republics of Mexico, Central and South America, Hayti, San Domingo, and the Empire of Brazil to join the United States in a conference to be held at Washington, in the United States, at such time as he may deem proper in the year eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, for the purpose of discussing and recommending for adoption to their respective Governments some plan of arbitration for the settlement of disagreements and disputes that may hereafter arise between them, and for considering questions relating to the improvement of business intercourse and means of direct communication between said countries, and to encourage such reciprocal commercial relations as will be beneficial to all and secure more extensive markets for the products of each of said countries.

It is also provided in the act referred to that in forwarding the invitations to the said Governments the President of the United States shall set forth that the Conference is called to consider—

First. Measures that shall tend to preserve and promote the prosperity of the several American States.

Second. Measures toward the formation of an American customs union, under which the trade of the American nations with each other shall, so far as possible and profitable, be promoted.

Third. The establishment of regular and frequent communication between the ports of the several American States and the ports of each other.

Fourth. The establishment of a uniform system of customs regulations in each of the independent American States to govern the mode of importation and exportation of merchandise and port dues and charges, a uniform method of determining the classification and valuation of such merchandise in the ports of each country, and a uniform system of invoices, and the subject of the sanitation of ships and quarantine.

Fifth. The adoption of a uniform system of weights and measures, and laws to protect the patent-rights, copyrights, and trade-marks of citizens of either country in the other, and for the extradition of criminals.

Sixth. The adoption of a common silver coin, to be issued by each Government, the same to be legal tender in all commercial transactions between the citizens of all of the American States.

Seventh. An agreement upon and recommendation for adoption to their respective Governments of a definite plan of arbitration of all questions, disputes, and differences, that

¹International American Conference, 1889–1890 *Reports of Committees and Discussions Thereon*, vol. 1, p. 9; *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1888, p. 1658.



may now or hereafter exist between them, to the end that all difficulties and disputes between such nations may be peaceably settled and wars prevented.

Eighth. And to consider such other subjects relating to the welfare of the several States represented as may be presented by any of said States which are hereby invited to participate in said Conference.

I have to call your particular attention to the scope and object of the Conference suggested, which, as will be observed, is consultative and recommendatory only. The proposed Conference will be wholly without power to bind any of the parties thereto, and it is not designed to affect or impair in any degree the treaty relations now existing between any of the States which may be represented. The topics for discussion and deliberation are manifestly of profound importance, and it is believed that a friendly and frank exchange of views in relation to these subjects will be of practical use, and, by mutual enlightenment, will materially promote that expansion and intimacy of social and commercial relations which must be fruitful of blessings to all concerned.

Certain topics are suggested as proper subjects for a comparison of views, but the field is expressly left open to any participant State to bring before the Conference such other subjects as may appear important to the welfare of the several States represented.

By direction, therefore, of the President of the United States, and in his name, you will tender to the Government of a cordial invitation to be represented by such number of Delegates as may seem to it convenient, at the International Conference to be convened as aforesaid in the city of Washington, on Wednesday, the 2d day of October, of the coming year, 1889, it being understood, however, that in the disposition of questions to come before such Conference no State shall be entitled to more than one vote, whatever be the number of Delegates it may send.

You will make this invitation known by reading this note to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of and by leaving with him a copy if he should express a desire to possess it. You will at the same time, and with the use of such suggestions and expression of views as in your judgment may be deemed appropriate, make known to his excellency the sincere desire and confident expectation of the President that this invitation will be received in the same spirit of friendship and deference by which it has been prompted.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

T. F. BAYARD,
Secretary of State.