

Democratic governance can be understood as the capacity of governments to sustain orderly political processes and defend the public interest, so that they may achieve their political objectives. Governability consists of the realities of everyday life, sustained by the interaction between (governments) and civil society, facilitated by institutions capable of building consensus, resolving social and political disagreements and guaranteeing respect for the rights of citizens.

It is within this framework, that the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy of the Organization of American States has established a Special Program for the Promotion of Dialogue and Conflict Resolution that offers various tools, training methodologies and experts from the field of conflict resolution to the member states. The program's mission is to strengthen and consolidate democratic governance, expand participatory forms of decision-making and help institutionalize conflict resolution and prevention systems upon the request of the member states.

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SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR THE PROMOTION OF DIALOGUE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION



**UNIT FOR THE PROMOTION
OF DEMOCRACY**

GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

A SPECIALIZED PROGRAM OF THE
UNIT FOR THE PROMOTION OF
DEMOCRACY THAT SUPPORTS
GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL
SOCIETY EFFORTS TO PROMOTE
DIALOGUE, BUILD CONSENSUS AND
PEACEFULLY RESOLVE DISPUTES

STRENGTHENING THE QUALITY OF GOVERNANCE IN THE AMERICAS

The Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD) is the principal body within the OAS General Secretariat responsible for assisting member states in the consolidation of their democratic institutions, procedures, and practices. In 2001, the UPD established a Special Program for the Promotion of Dialogue and Conflict Resolution aimed at assisting member states in developing national and sub-regional capacity in dialogue, consensus building and conflict resolution.

For the countries of the Hemisphere to meet the numerous social, political and economic challenges in a context of increasing complexity and diversity, it is essential to strengthen constructive attitudes, skills and abilities; build solid institutions, which can facilitate dialogue and consensus-building processes between government and civil society. The Special Program for the Promotion of Dialogue and Conflict Resolution makes available to member states as well as to the Organization, skills, methodologies, strategies and specialized human resources in the area of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, which have been developed by the UPD within the framework of its field experiences during the last 11 years.

The Mission: To Foster Dialogue

The mission is to contribute to the development of responses to deep-rooted socio-political conflicts and critical challenges facing member states and their societies. The programs are designed to promote values, attitudes, and practices that foster inclusion, collaboration, citizen participation, and consensual decision-making.

FOSTERING CROSS-SECTOR COOPERATION

The Special Program employs a methodology that brings together parties in conflict, with a view towards increasing government-civil society collaboration in the resolution of pressing social and political conflicts, and in the formulation of public policy.

The specific objectives of the Special Program are:

- » To strengthen the capacity of government institutions and civil society organizations in conflict analysis, the construction of social and political consensus, and the design of dialogue processes and negotiation systems.
- » To facilitate the institutionalization of mechanisms for dialogue and consensual decision-making within state agencies or ministries.
- » To sponsor regional and hemispheric exchanges among program counterparts working in the areas of democratization and peacebuilding.
- » To systematize and share lessons learned, methodologies, and learning materials from OAS experiences in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The SPECIAL PROGRAM provides technical support and services upon request to:

The Organization: The Permanent Council, the OAS General Secretariat, and specialized Units within the Organization.

Member States: Government agencies or institutions operating in critical spheres of conflict; and their civil society counterparts.

FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES

- » Conflict analysis, monitoring, and assessment
- » Design of strategies or processes for multi-sectoral dialogue and political negotiations
- » Conflict management system design
- » Training in third-party facilitation
- » Facilitation of consensus and decision-making processes through both intra and inter-group dialogue and negotiations

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

PROPAZ: A specialized UPD Program that since 1995 has supported Guatemala's peace process. It provides strategic support to increase government and civil society capacity in dialogue promotion and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Sub-regional Program for Central America: An initiative to promote multi-sectoral dialogue at the sub-regional level on critical issues of common interest (crime prevention, land reform, etc.) and to strengthen local, national and sub-regional strategies for dealing with these issues.

Programs to Strengthen Governance: A series of initiatives to assist governments to peacefully resolve socio-political conflicts through the development of institutional mechanisms for citizen participation, the design of conflict resolution systems, and specific dialogue or political negotiations processes.

National and Regional Forum for Government and Civil Society Dialogue: A program that promotes the exchange of experiences and ideas in order to improve government and civil society relations, enhance political dialogue, and increase citizen participation in the formulation of public policy as a mechanism for strengthening democratic governance.