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DRAFT RESOLUTION

PROGRAM FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN THE AMERICAS

(Approved by the Permanent Council at its meeting of May 14, 2004)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING that the Charter of the Organization of American States recognizes that representative democracy is an indispensable condition for the stability, peace, and development of the region;

BEARING IN MIND that the Inter-American Democratic Charter reaffirmed the commitment of the governments of the Americas to the promotion and consolidation of democracy, and that democracy is essential for the social, political, and economic development of the peoples of the Americas;

CONSIDERING that the Heads of State and Government, meeting at the Special Summit of the Americas in January 2004, adopted the Declaration of Nuevo León, in which they reaffirmed the Hemisphere's commitment to democracy and to the strengthening of democratic governance;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Declaration of Santiago on Democracy and Public Trust: A New Commitment to Good Governance for the Americas [AG/DEC. 31 (XXXIII-O/03)];

RECALLING that resolution AG/RES. 1960 (XXXIII-O/03), “Program for Democratic Governance in the Americas,” instructed the Permanent Council to prepare, on the basis of the decisions of the Heads of State and Government at the Special Summit of the Americas, and with support from the UPD, a proposed “Program for Democratic Governance in the Americas,” to be presented to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth regular session; and

TAKING NOTE of the contributions made by member states (CP/CISC-82/04 corr. 1 add. 1 to 8) toward the preparation of a “Program for Democratic Governance in the Americas,” pursuant to resolution AG/RES. 1960 (XXXIII-O/03),

RESOLVES:

1. To reiterate the commitment of the member states of the Organization to the full exercise and application in the Hemisphere of the democratic principles and values set forth in the Inter-American Democratic Charter and other relevant instruments, and to the search for the best mechanisms for their full development.
2. To reaffirm the contents of the Declaration of Nuevo León, especially in relation to democratic governance.

3. To approve the document appended to this resolution, “Guidelines for the Program for Democratic Governance in the Americas,” and to request the Permanent Council to define that program, with the support of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy and the Unit for Social Development and Education.

4. To instruct the Permanent Council and the General Secretariat to carry out the activities referred to in this resolution within the resources allocated in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.

5. To request the Permanent Council to report to the General Assembly at its next regular session on the implementation of this resolution.

APPENDIX

GUIDELINES FOR THE “PROGRAM FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN THE AMERICAS” [OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 3 OF RESOLUTION AG/RES. 1960 (XXXIII-O/03)]

I. INTRODUCTION

The Charter of the Organization of American States established the commitment to democracy as one of the key features of the Organization. This commitment has evolved over time, so as to address political developments in the Hemisphere more effectively and confront the challenges of an ever-changing world with new and appropriate mechanisms.

At the thirty-third regular session of the General Assembly of the OAS, held in Chile in 2003, member states decided to address those challenges by undertaking an analysis of democratic governance. As a result, the General Assembly adopted resolution AG/RES. 1960 (XXXIII-O/03). Operative paragraph 3 of the above-mentioned resolution instructed the Permanent Council “to prepare, on the basis of the decisions of the Heads of State and Government at the Special Summit of the Americas, and with support from the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, a proposed ‘Program for Democratic Governance in the Americas,’ to be presented to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth regular session.” According to the distribution of mandates approved by the Permanent Council on July 16, 2003 (CP/doc.3763/03 rev. 1), this topic was delegated to the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation on OAS Activities (CISC).

The first step taken to prepare the Program for Democratic Governance was the holding of a meeting of experts in November of 2003, to analyze the main challenges to democratic governance in the region. The Permanent Council received a report of the meeting and referred it for review to the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management. The CISC debated the content of the report and advanced in the preparation of specific inputs, which became the basis for the current proposal, prepared jointly by the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy and the Unit for Social Development and Education of the General Secretariat.

II. BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAM FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN THE AMERICAS

In response to the new political challenges in the Hemisphere, as well as the need to give concrete expression to the mandates of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Organization of American States has brought the issue of democratic governance to the forefront. This issue is analyzed under the broad perspective of democracy outlined in the Democratic Charter, and taking into account the notion of integral development. As stated in the Inter-American Democratic Charter itself in Article 11, “[D]emocracy and social and economic development are interdependent and are mutually reinforcing.”

This concept of democratic governance reaffirms and reinforces the basic principles set forth in Article 2 of the OAS Charter and in instruments and declarations on democracy adopted by the Organization throughout its existence, and in particular, since the return to democracy throughout the region. Without attempting to review each of these instruments in detail, it is worth reviewing those that have recently stated the Organization's position on the subject.

In this regard, it is important to mention the "Santiago Commitment to Democracy and the Renewal of the Inter-American System" (June 1991), the "Declaration of Managua for the Promotion of Democracy and Development" (1993), and more recently, the "Declaration of Santiago on Democracy and Public Trust: A New Commitment to Good Governance for the Americas."

Finally, one should mention the Declarations of the Heads of State and Government of the Summits of the Americas, and particularly, section three of the Declaration of Nuevo León, which outlines the principal commitments related to democratic governance.

III. CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE PROGRAM FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN THE AMERICAS

This Program seeks to establish a set of objectives and complementary actions to address the interrelationship between democracy and socioeconomic development, due to the interdependent and mutually reinforcing nature of both areas. The Program is geared toward advancing an agenda for good governance that addresses the "political, economic, and social challenges to foster credibility and public trust in democratic institutions," as expressed by the Heads of State and Government of the Americas in the "Declaration of Nuevo León."

The multidimensional nature of democratic governance is evident in the many aspects that come into play when analyzing the subject. The basic understanding of the Organization of American States has been that democratic governance manifests itself in three different areas: the political-institutional, socioeconomic, and security. The proposed framework of the Program for Democratic Governance is built on the priority components identified for each area. It does not include every single aspect of the wide range of perspectives and activities that may be taken into account on such broad and complex subjects. This Program must also be developed with a clear gender perspective.

In the political-institutional area, the Program aims to consolidate the basic institutions of representative democracy, to facilitate the democratic management of conflicts particularly through conflict prevention and through conflict resolution, and to promote a democratic culture. In this domain, the Program further seeks to strengthen the capacity of key players, such as political parties and civil society organizations; to channel citizens' demands and reach the necessary basic agreements in society; to strengthen the rule of law and the separation and balance of power among the branches of government; to protect human rights; and to advance in the fight against corruption. The underlying premise is that a well functioning democracy is a prerequisite for economic and social development.

In the socioeconomic area, the Program draws upon the consensus arrived at the OAS regarding the attainment of equitable economic growth to reduce poverty, social development, and democratic governance, as three objectives that are closely linked and interdependent. These three

objectives are considered to be essential to the welfare of the population: Poverty, inequality, and social exclusion are recognized as the leading causes of instability in the region and should, therefore, be addressed integrally and as a matter of urgency.

In the security domain, the Program seeks to reaffirm the commitments adopted in the "Declaration on Security in the Americas" (2003) and, in particular, to address the multidimensional nature of security as recognized in the "Bridgetown Declaration" (2002).

IV. OBJECTIVES

The following are the main objectives of the Program for Democratic Governance in the Americas:

A. To enhance the transparency and credibility of democratic institutions:

To promote the credibility of and public trust in democratic institutions, recognizing the integrated nature of the political, economic, and social aspects of development;

To strengthen the basic institutions of representative democracy, particularly, the transparency and legitimacy of electoral processes, and the observance of human rights;

To increase the transparency and credibility of the political system and of public institutions, particularly by strengthening mechanisms for the fight against corruption;

To promote the full exercise of democratic values and practices and harmonious relations among citizens;

To build efficient, transparent, and responsible public institutions and, in particular, to strengthen the effective separation and balance of power among the branches of government;

B. To strengthen political representation and citizen participation:

To promote effective citizen participation, in particular, the participation of women, young people, minorities, and indigenous groups;

To strengthen political players, particularly political parties, and to seek to have them bring about the active involvement within their rank of minority segments of the population that are traditionally excluded from political, economic, and social processes;

To promote research and analysis on the feasibility of applying new institutional mechanisms to support governance, in particular, as they may relate to current presidential and parliamentary systems;

- C. To emphasize the interrelationship between democratic governance on one hand, and economic, social, cultural development and security-related matters, on the other:

To promote social development, adequate levels of well-being, and social participation for disadvantaged groups, as essential elements for eradicating poverty and social exclusion;

To promote access to decent and gainful employment as a necessary condition for the participation of citizens and communities in shaping an environment that fosters their general well-being.

To promote respect for and the development of cultural diversity in the Hemisphere as the basis for development, social cohesion, and harmonious relations among citizens;

To promote security in accordance with a multidimensional approach that takes into account new and traditional threats, concerns, and other challenges to security in the countries of the Hemisphere;

To promote debate that can further the quest for a new paradigm geared toward achieving economic development with equity in order to reduce poverty, achieve social development, and strengthen democratic governance;

- D. Specific objectives of the Program include the following:

To contribute effectively to member states' efforts to strengthen democratic governance;

To establish a coherent and coordinated framework to guide the actions taken by all bodies of the Organization with respect to democratic governance, thereby avoiding duplication of efforts and rationalizing the Organization's activities;

To promote cooperation, the exchange of information, and political dialogue among member states on the subject of democratic governance;

To facilitate fundraising for cooperation in this area.

V. GENERAL MANAGEMENT CRITERIA

Activities carried out under this Program will be based on the following guidelines:

Intersectoral cooperation aimed at integrating different views on economic, political, and social matters at the hemispheric and regional levels, conducting a comprehensive review of challenges to democratic governance, and preparing a work plan that incorporates these concerns;

An invitation to civil society organizations to participate along with the governments of our countries in the efforts to enhance governance, and the promotion of opportunities for civil society participation at all levels;

Inter-agency cooperation to ensure that the institutions in the inter-American system that are responsible for political, economic, and social issues work in a more integrated manner to strengthen democratic governance;

Efforts to improve follow-up to mandates emanating from the Summits of the Americas process and from sectoral, ministerial-level meetings, related to the subject of democratic governance.

VI. PRINCIPAL LINES OF ACTION

A. Political-institutional area

To convene a Governmental Conference on Democratic Governance in order to promote the preparation of national agendas on the topic;

To promote and undertake the study of political reforms needed to improve political systems in the region, both at a comparative level as well as for specific cases;

To promote and further full respect for human rights, as well as strategies for their protection and to seek mechanisms to facilitate, in particular, the exercise of economic and social rights;

To improve and strengthen mechanisms for conflict prevention, crisis management, and conflict resolution within states by facilitating dialogue and generating consensus;

To place emphasis on and ensure the separation and balance of power among the branches of government and, particularly, to strengthen the capability and independence of the judiciary and its effectiveness in the administration of justice;

To ensure the transparency and legitimacy of electoral processes and, particularly, to advance on mechanisms which facilitate transparency with regard to political financing mechanisms;

To strengthen the capacity of parliaments and, in particular, to build mechanisms to enable legislatures to develop effective oversight and political power;

To strengthen party systems and the political parties themselves, especially by instituting legal and financial guarantees to enable them to exercise their ongoing role of representing the demands of the citizenry and their democratic role in opposition;

To promote the active participation of civil society organizations in public life and to design strategies for building social capital;

To improve strategies and mechanisms for the fight against corruption and to increase transparency in public administration and political activities;

To deepen decentralization processes and open up new opportunities for civic participation at the local level;

To promote a democratic culture, particularly through the design of formal and non-formal education strategies that may contribute to the exercise of democratic values and practices, and to harmonious relations among citizens, and to promote the development of programs that facilitate a better understanding of citizens' rights and more active participation in political life;

To deepen state modernization processes and, in particular, to facilitate access to public information and the adoption of strategies which raise the level of efficiency, probity, and transparency of state institutions.

B. In the economic and social areas

To promote the search for points of consensus on fostering economic development with equity in order to reduce poverty;

To support the economic development of rural and indigenous communities, with special attention to self-management processes and community participation, to strengthen democratic governance in its global perspective and in accordance with inter-American guidelines;

To promote the organized and responsible participation of civil society, and greater scope for action by the affected groups themselves, in the application of targeted multisectoral programs to combat poverty;

To promote the training of various social and governmental players to strengthen their participation in the definition, execution, evaluation, and follow-up of strategies to fight poverty;

To create and strengthen mechanisms for civil society participation that seek to ensure transparency, access to public information, and accountability vis-à-vis the community with regard to the management and use of the resources of public institutions;

To promote public discussion and the adoption of mutually agreed upon mechanisms to alleviate the impact of economic crises on the well-being of vulnerable social sectors;

To raise the skills level of workers and improve working conditions throughout the Hemisphere, giving special attention to those segments of the population that have been hit the hardest by economic crises. To actively involve the labor movement and business associations in discussions on these topics;

To develop programs that boost micro- and small enterprises in response to the needs of vulnerable groups and as a strategy for earning a livelihood;

To ensure conditions to enable populations with specific cultural identities to help shape the parameters for citizen participation;

To implement strategies for the social inclusion of disadvantaged communities and their active participation in the life of the country, while respecting their identity and promoting a pluralistic climate;

To analyze and systematize experiences in the Hemisphere on developing intercultural dialogue as a means of promoting peace, eradicating all forms of discrimination, and achieving full participation by all people in political, economic, social, and cultural life.

C. In the area of security

To strengthen the principles and inter-American instruments on security, in particular, the provisions agreed upon in the Declaration on Security in the Americas, and to actively support actions undertaken by the Committee on Hemispheric Security to develop them.

D. In the area of interrelationships among the various components:

To promote increased analysis of the relationship between democracy and development, in particular, by studying the specific interrelationship between the development agenda defined in the Monterrey Consensus and the “Millennium Development Goals,” and the improvement of democratic governance in the region;

To move forward with the analysis of the interrelationships between political systems in the region and the challenges of poverty, inequality, and exclusion, so as to explore mechanisms for ensuring that democracy contributes to a more equitable and inclusive development;

To create opportunities for discussion and facilitate initiatives that connect ongoing integration processes in the Hemisphere, in particular, the construction of a future Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), with democratic processes in the region;

To promote an analysis of the impact that the globalization process and, particularly, the role of international financial organizations, have on democratic governance in the region;

To move ahead with analysis of issues related to the democratic capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts;

To promote the organization of a special meeting of the Permanent Council on democratic governance with the participation of representatives of international organizations, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, among others.

VII. METHODOLOGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM

A. Defining priorities and drafting the work plan

Once the overall guidelines of the Program for Democratic Governance in the Americas are defined and approved, specific and priority program activities, which will generate the greatest possible impact, will be devised. To this end, the Inventory of Activities on Democracy carried out

by the Organization and prepared annually by the UPD, will be considered. In addition, proposals put forward by member states included in the document “Inputs for preparation of the Program” (CP/CISC-99/04 corr. 1) will be used as a basis. The Unit for the Promotion of Democracy and the Unit for Social Development and Education will use these inputs to draft a preliminary Plan of Action detailing the specific activities required to put in place the Program.

B. Defining levels of management and institutional responsibilities

Specific activities to be carried out under this Program will be divided into several levels. The first level will include activities undertaken by the inter-American system, mainly through the Permanent Council and the General Secretariat of the Organization. The second level will include those activities which, by their very nature, correspond to the member states. The execution of these activities will be at the discretion (optional) of each member state. These activities will be promoted at the Governmental Conference through the exchange of information and methodologies and through encouragement for the development of National Agendas for strengthening democratic governance. Finally, a third level will include activities that need the support and cooperation of other institutions that are not necessarily part of the inter-American system. This level could include activities undertaken by both international agencies and civil society organizations.