

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



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Item 24 on the agenda

DRAFT RESOLUTION

PROMOTION AND STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRACY

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN the reports of the Permanent Council on the implementation of resolutions AG/RES. 1957 (XXXIII-O/03) and AG/RES. 1960 (XXXIII-O/03) (CP/doc. 3899/04) and (CP/doc. /04);

MINDFUL that the Charter of the Organization of American States establishes in its preamble “that representative democracy is an indispensable condition for the stability, peace and development of the region” and that it establishes that one of the essential purposes of the Organization is “to promote and consolidate representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of nonintervention”;

CONSIDERING that the Heads of State and Government, meeting at the Special Summit of the Americas, issued the Declaration of Nuevo León, in which they reaffirmed the hemispheric commitment to democracy;

RECALLING that, in the Declaration of Nuevo León, they reiterated their commitment to the full application of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which is an element of the region's identity and, at the international level, a contribution by our Hemisphere to the community of nations;

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 Americas;

RECALLING also that the Declaration on Security in the Americas reaffirmed the total commitment of states to full observance of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, to its values, principles, and mechanisms, and to strengthening the inter-American system for the protection of human rights, and recommended that action be taken to promote democratic culture in keeping with the provisions of the Inter-American Democratic Charter;

AWARE that the Declaration of Mexico, signed by the Ministers of Education of the Hemisphere, recognizes the importance of raising cultural awareness and promoting democratic values in present and future generations, especially in education as a key means of strengthening democratic institutions; and

BEARING IN MIND the Declaration of Santiago on Democracy and Public Trust: A New Commitment to Good Governance for the Americas [AG/DEC. 31 (XXXIII-O/03)],

RESOLVES:

1. To reaffirm the commitment of the OAS member states to the full exercise and application in the Hemisphere of the democratic principles and values set forth in the OAS Charter, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and other relevant international instruments.

2. To support member states in their continued collective efforts to strengthen democratic governance, fight corruption, enhance the rule of law, bring about the full exercise of human rights, and fight poverty, inequity, and social exclusion.

3. To invite civil society organizations to continue fostering democratic governance in the Hemisphere by promoting respect for the rule of law and for the values and principles enshrined in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

4. To support the initiative by the Ministers of Education to pursue the principles enshrined in the Inter-American Democratic Charter through educational programs, in keeping with the system of each country.

5. To recommend member states to promote and publicize the Inter-American Democratic Charter, in accordance with the mandate “Follow-up and Development of the Inter-American Democratic Charter,” established as a permanent General Assembly agenda item.

6. To instruct the Permanent Council, in the context of the commitments and mandates arising from the OAS Charter, the Summits of the Americas process, and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, to:

- a. Continue to examine the principal challenges to democratic governance, especially those related to strengthening democratic institutions and promoting economic and social development, and to continue its work on defining the Program for Democratic Governance in the Americas;
- b. Continue to hold a meeting in the first quarter of each year to review activities undertaken by the Organization in the preceding calendar year to promote and strengthen democracy;
- c. Hold a meeting in October 2004 on strengthening political parties as key players in a democracy, with the support of the General Secretariat, through the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, and with the presence of representatives of the Inter-American Forum on Political Parties; and
- d. Hold a meeting, in the first quarter of 2005, on the constitutional subordination of all state institutions to legally constituted civilian authority and on respect for the rule of law on the part of all institutions and sectors of society, with the support of the General Secretariat, through the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, and with the presence of representatives from academic institutions, political parties, and civil society.

7. To recognize the work of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy as a focal point of the inter-American agenda in the area of democracy and, in particular, in the fulfillment of the mandates of the Summits process, support for dissemination of the Democratic Charter, and implementation of General Assembly mandates; and, in this regard, to request the General Secretariat, through the UPD, to:

- a. Coordinate the activities and programs of the various units and offices of the General Secretariat relating to the promotion of democracy, in accordance with the provisions of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, so as to be more effective in fulfilling the mandates on the inter-American agenda;
- b. Promote measures to provide governments and civil society with a better understanding of the Democratic Charter and the inter-American agenda for the promotion and defense of democracy;
- c. Develop programs, with competent national authorities in member states who deem it appropriate, to strengthen the system of democratic institutions and the principles, values, and practices underpinning it, focusing on the essential components and vital elements of a representative democracy;
- d. Continue to prepare the annual inventory of activities related to the promotion of democracy, for consideration by the Permanent Council, and include specific suggestions for improving the impact of said activities;

- e. Continue its information-sharing with the Community of Democracies process, especially to promote awareness of the Inter-American Democratic Charter as a hemispheric contribution to that Community;
- f. Strengthen the capacity of the Inter-American Forum on Political Parties (FIAPP), as a basic mechanism for coordinating efforts in this area, and promote the necessary measures to carry out the Inter-American Agenda on Modernization and Reform of Party Systems and Political Parties, and to lend technical assistance to member states that so request in the formulation and implementation of political reforms to strengthen party systems, increase the transparency of political funding, and enhance the capacity of parties to exercise their functions both within the government and as part of the opposition;
- g. Continue its efforts to promote political dialogue as a conflict prevention and resolution mechanism and as an instrument for strengthening democratic governance. In that connection, the holding in Lima, Peru, last March, of the Regional Forum “Latin American Experiences with Dialogue and Consensus-Building and the Challenge of Their Institutionalization” is a valuable example of cooperation between a member state and the OAS General Secretariat in this area;

- h. Continue to support the efforts of legislatures in member states to promote modernization, especially organization of the First Inter-American Forum on Legislative Modernization, and the strengthening of legislatures, as well as inter-parliamentary cooperation on key items of the inter-American agenda, with a view, in particular, to generating initiatives to strengthen the capacity of parliaments to fight corruption, poverty, inequality, and social exclusion;
- i. Generate initiatives to examine and bring about a better understanding of the role of the media in the promotion and defense of democracy;
- j. Take into account in its activities the contribution that information and communications technology can make in developing more just, open, and democratic societies;
- k. Present semiannual progress reports on the execution of its work plan;
- l. Promote examination of the relationship between democratic governance and the processes of decentralization and strengthening the intermediate and local levels, by way of a seminar coordinated with the authorities of the High-Level Inter-American Network on Decentralization, Local Government, and Citizen Participation (RIAD) and with the participation of other international agencies.

8. To recognize the joint endeavors of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy and the Unit for Social Development and Education, in the strengthening of democracy through education as well as in the effort to link the democracy agenda with the promotion of social development.

9. To request the General Secretariat, through both Units, and others, as appropriate, to:

- a. Continue to develop activities and programs to help member states carry out the mandates of the Summits of the Americas process, especially on the basis of the Declaration of Nuevo León as it pertains to democratic governance and social development;
- b. Continue to support Permanent Council efforts to define the Program for Democratic Governance in the Americas and to identify the appropriate actions to improve democratic governance;
- c. Promote activities to link the democracy agenda with the promotion of development; and to call on other institutions with responsibilities in the area of development to study how to move forward, together with CIDI;
- d. Present to the Permanent Council a basic document for preparation of an inter-American program for education in democratic values for peace and human rights, bearing in mind the recommendations of the special meeting held on April 12 and 13, 2004, by the Permanent Council, on the promotion of democratic culture through education;

- e. Continue to develop training programs to promote the principles, values, and practices of a democratic culture, on the basis of Articles 26 and 27 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

10. To urge all bodies of the inter-American system, especially the Inter-American Commission of Women, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the General Secretariat, through the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy and the Unit for Social Development and Education to continue working to remove existing obstacles to full participation by women in democratic processes, taking into account Article 28 of the Inter-American Charter and the recommendations of Permanent Council meetings on this matter.

11. To urge member states and permanent observers to continue to contribute to the Special Fund for Strengthening Democracy, the Fund for Peace: Peaceful Settlement of Territorial Disputes, and the Permanent Specific Fund to Finance Activities Related to OAS Electoral Observation Missions.

12. To ensure that the actions and programs proposed in this resolution will be carried out in accordance with resources allocated in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.

13. To instruct the Permanent Council to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth regular session on the implementation of this resolution.