

**Dialogue of Heads of Delegation, the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General and Civil Society Representatives, Workers, the Private Sector and other Social Actors**

**June 21st, 2023, 9:00 – 13:00 hs.**

**Washington DC, USA**

**SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS OF COALITIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ACTORS[[1]](#footnote-1)**

1. **Trade Union Technical Advisory Council**

The labor movement of the Americas, represented by its continental organization, the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) and the Trade Union Technical Advisory Council (COSATE-OAS) adopt the following Declaration:

Trade union organizations are historically **defenders and promoters of democratic institutionality**, based on the understanding that it is a necessary condition for the participation of working people in defining the destinies of our countries and our region, with Social Justice and the full exercise of human rights being two of the most important collective aspirations.

As a regional trade union movement organized in the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) we have reaffirmed in the **Resolution of our 4th Congress** that *"Peace, Democracy and Human Rights are fundamental values of the working class*".

In the current regional situation, there are serious threats to the democratic system. We express our concern for the **proliferation of hate speech** against vulnerable groups and minorities, for the growing political violence, for the attacks on the institutionality of the democratic system and the aggressions in the public debate, all factors that threaten stability and coexistence in society.

We emphasize the need for **public policies** that avoid social disintegration and promote the use of new information technologies and infrastructure at the service of **democratic communication** that respects diversity and tolerance, and the full exercise of the right to communication.

**We affirm the important role of trade unions as instruments for the exercise of human rights and fundamental political subjects of the rule of law**, which must assume its role as guarantor of the protection of human rights including social and labor rights, and promoting a culture of social dialogue and consultation.

In a context of increasing inequalities and deepening problems of exclusion for the majority of the population, we claim the urgency of an **institutionalized social dialogue** with full participation of social actors, as a tool for consensus building that will allow us to mobilize a **roadmap for sustainable, inclusive and socially just development, placing decent and dignified work at the center of public policies**.

The **right to freedom of association and trade union freedom** are at the core of democracy and the rule of law, as they generate conditions for the effective participation of social actors in economic and integral human development policies.

**However, we are witnessing repeated violations of the legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining in some countries, manifested in persecution, assassinations, kidnappings, smear campaigns and forms of discrimination on trade union grounds, which erode democratic governance and the exercise of social dialogue.**

**Faced with this scenario, trade unionism in the Americas has prepared and is promoting the "Guidelines for a Model Labor Code for Latin America and the Caribbean" as a contribution to positively update the agenda of labor and trade union rights in the face of the offensive of conservative anti-labor reforms that continue to place the cost of the crisis on the backs of workers.**

We affirm that **the tutelary and proactive role of governments in the promotion and protection of the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining** is essential to generate conditions for dialogue and agreement, and to prevent situations of criminalization of trade union organizations, their representatives and the actions they carry out to demand their rights.

**We note with concern the initiatives aimed at limiting the legitimate exercise of workers' right to strike**. For these reasons, we consider substantive the contribution made by the **Inter-American Court of Human Rights in its Advisory Opinion No. 27/21 of May 5, 2021,** because it has stated that "*the right to freedom of association, collective bargaining and strike are human rights protected in the framework of the inter-American system, which entails the obligation of the States to adopt mechanisms to guarantee them, including access to an effective judicial recourse against acts that violate such rights, the prevention, investigation and punishment of those responsible for violations of trade union rights, and to adopt specific measures for their full enforcement*".

**We also affirm that the strengthening of democracy will result in its legitimacy and recognition as a privileged instrument to respond to the demands and expectations of our peoples.**

We find ourselves in a global context of multiple overlapping crises that deepen the deficient living conditions of our populations. For years, the peoples of the region have been suffering from problems that have become structural, such as informality and job insecurity; unequal income distribution; gender gaps; child and forced labor; gaps in access to social protection and essential basic services; extreme poverty; lack of educational opportunities and decent work; digital gaps; violence and harassment; discrimination in all its forms**. We cannot naturalize the persistence of these issues.**

**We call on the governments of the region to implement, within a framework of tripartite consultation, economic, social and labor public policies to address, in a coherent and articulated manner, the structural problems that form a matrix that reproduces poverty, inequality and exclusion.**

Globally and regionally, we are witnessing an accelerated transformation of the world of work. The incorporation of technology in production processes, new ways of organizing work and production, and the processes of adaptation to climate change are part of the challenges of the present and the **future of work**.

We affirm the need to address these challenges within a framework of **just transition** by promoting institutionalized social dialogue, the defense of workers' rights, and social protection and vocational training policies, recognizing the **intersectionalities of inequality** that often operate as factors of exclusion in our societies.

We also warn about the **conditionalities** that loom over the state's capacity to implement policies for social protection, equality, employment generation and sustainable development:

* The **debts of many countries with private creditors and international financing agencies**.
* The conditions established in the **free trade and investment agreements** signed by many of the countries.
* The **costly lawsuits in international tribunals** that many countries face for having taken measures or adopted policies that transnational corporations have considered detrimental to their interests and profits.
* **Multilateral cooperation flows**, which were already deficient before the pandemic and are currently insufficient to achieve progress on the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
* The existence of **regressive tax systems** that penalize lower-income sectors, in addition to the scourge of **tax evasion and avoidance** that contributes to the existence of "tax havens", depriving nation states of resources to implement policies for social protection, employment, just transition and sustainable and inclusive development.
* The **corporate capture** of democracies in the hands of transnational corporate interests and foreign investment funds.

**It is necessary to strengthen the Nation States in order to achieve a Welfare State, promoter of social dialogue and promoter of strategic planning for sustainable and inclusive productive development.**

We vindicate the role of trade unions as **socio-political actors** whose representation and participation is not limited to the purely vindicating professional interests, but rather calls upon them to be part, as **actors of development**, of the deepening of democratic debates for the concerted construction of a new social contract.

We ratify the postulates and programmatic lines of action expressed in the **Platform for the Development of the Americas (PLADA)** as a substantial contribution of regional trade unionism to the debate on the options/models for the development of the Americas. We reaffirm what is expressed in the PLADA as follows:

"*This is the vision of development that builds our union option: it reaffirms the pillars of decent work, wealth distribution, participatory democracy, gender equality and equity, social protection and inclusion for all, environmental justice and just transition, thus integrating the political, economic, social and environmental dimensions. Development cannot be achieved without the full inclusion and participation of women and youth. In all the components presented in this platform, gender equity and youth participation are cross-cutting approaches and a condition of possibility*".

Deepening our democracies and sovereignty requires a **regional integration of countries and peoples**, articulating the proposals of the trade union movement with all the social actors of the continent, within a framework of coherence and convergence of integration processes. The Americas and, in particular, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, must advance in the configuration of articulated regional spaces to build consensus and influence the international agenda in defense of the interests of their countries and their peoples.

We demand a greater commitment on the part of the Organization of American States - OAS - in compliance with its mandate to promote regional unity and cooperation, in order to **strengthen the regional integration of countries and peoples, convening all countries, favoring dialogue and cooperative action in the Americas, within the framework of respect for the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples. It is essential to overcome the time of blockades, sanctions and exclusion of countries, since they have contributed nothing to overcoming the enormous problems of our peoples**.

We recognize the important role of the **Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor of the OAS (IACML - OAS)** and the participation of **COSATE** and **CEATAL** in this space as well as the articulation developed with other areas of the Inter-American system such as the **Inter-American Commission of Women** and the **Inter-American Committee on Education**, as agreed in the Declaration of Buenos Aires of the IACML and its Plan of Action 2021.

It is important to **continue strengthening instruments such as the Inter-American Network of Labor Administrations - RIAL -** with the sustained contribution of governments, recognizing asymmetries and the need for differentiated support according to levels of economic development.

We express the need to achieve greater **coordination, articulation and coherence between regional and international financial institutions and the agencies of the United Nations system** with a presence in the region, particularly the International Labor Organization (ILO) and its Decent Work Program.

We also reaffirm our intention to strengthen ties with the **Commission and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights**, calling on the OAS to continue working to guarantee the exercise of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR), and in particular those related to labor and trade union rights, freedom of association and collective bargaining, as a key condition for combating inequality. We also request that the contributions of the regional trade union movement be taken into account in the consultation processes of the relevant bodies of the inter-American system.

It is important to sustain the **pacification processes** in order to consolidate a region free of armed conflicts and as a zone of peace. We reaffirm once again what has been expressed in this regard through the PLADA:

"*The CFS promotes the construction of peace with social justice through the negotiated political solution of armed conflicts and political conflicts within and between countries, the condemnation of coups d'état and destabilizing foreign interference. We understand political solution to be that based on the principles of international law, democracy, sovereignty and self-determination of peoples and nations*".

"*Peace is a good of humanity, it is based on the dignity of individuals and is built on the realization and interdependence of human rights, respect for the sovereignty of nations and democracy. It is a permanent endeavor, the* ***fruit of social justice and solidarity among individuals, nations and peoples****”.*

**The TUCA and COSATE ratify that they will continue to accompany the work of trade union organizations in each country of the region, defending together with them the human and democratic rights and, particularly, the rights and interests of all workers.**

**Trade Union Technical Advisory Council of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor - OAS (COSATE - OAS)**

**Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA)**

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| **3. PRIVATE SECTOR. Daniel Funes De Rioja (Comité Empresarial de Asesoramiento Técnico de Asuntos Laborales-CEATAL)** |

1. **COALITION INCLUSIVE DIALOGUES. Enrique de Obarrio (Red Latinoamericana y del Caribe para la Democracia - Redlad).**

Good morning civil society colleagues, respected representatives of the continent's governments, Secretary General Almagro, and other representatives of the OAS.

A new Assembly brings us back to the House of the OAS to discuss the strengthening of a culture of democratic accountability with promotion, protection, and equality of human rights in the Americas.

From the Coalition of Inclusive Dialogues, we want to share three main points as inputs for the conversation and as proposals for the governments present, and the OAS in particular, in order to recover the culture of democratic responsibility in the continent, which more than strengthening requires a kind of refoundation.

1. Democratic responsibility requires respect for the rule of law and the balance of powers.

1. The continent still has autocracies and dictatorships that must find a way back to democracy. It is urgent to establish joint actions for democratic transition in Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua.
2. The case of Haiti, which has already been undergoing many months of profound destabilization, coupled with high criminality, is of alarming concern. This new situation, added to the institutional weakness of the past, not only reduces the very capacity of the State but also puts its citizens at significant risk and puts even more pressure on the expulsion of nationals to other countries on the continent.
3. It is important to remind governments that the necessary decisions to improve security and deal with crises must in any case respect human rights. Recent decisions in El Salvador and Peru, to mention the most serious, threaten the rule of law and the human rights of citizens.

2. Democratic responsibility involves the fight against the cooptation of states by non-sancta interests. In this sense, corruption continues to be one of the main problems that erode our democracies internally. It is essential to continue the fight against corruption, in which the Lima Commitment, agreed at the 2018 Summit of the Americas, remains a concrete route for action. Now, the fight against corruption cannot serve as a Trojan horse to destabilize democratic institutions, and people and institutions that fight for a more upright America must be protected in a special way. The case of José Rubén Zamora in Guatemala is particularly alarming.

3. Democratic responsibility requires both the defense of human rights and the protection of civic space, the deepening of citizen participation, and the reduction of inequities.

1. The continent continues to be the most dangerous for activism and for the independent press. It is urgent to establish clear measures for the protection of human rights defenders and to guarantee freedom of the press. In these two aspects, the current situation in Colombia is of great concern.
2. The defense of human rights continues to be indispensable because without rights there is no democracy. In this regard, priority must be given to the most vulnerable individuals and groups, including children and adolescents, the elderly, people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, Afro-descendants and indigenous people, and people with disabilities. It is essential to address the violations and cross-discrimination, with a gender and intersectional perspective.
3. There is no democracy if civil society does not have the minimum guarantees to ensure its work. In this sense, the civic space must be respected, and the freedoms of association, peaceful demonstration, expression, and financing must be guaranteed at all times, but much more so in processes of instability. Most of the countries of the continent have narrow, obstructed, and repressive civic spaces. Without civil society, democracy becomes impossible.
4. Likewise, democracy is meaningless if there is no citizen participation. On the continent, corruption, polarization, and the few concrete results perceived by citizens regarding democratic action have created apathetic citizens who are highly sensitive to manipulation. It is vital to rebuild a critical, demanding, responsible, and active citizenry. Participation must also be guaranteed in all political scenarios in the hemisphere, and for this, the OAS must establish better processes of citizen inclusion and participation in its organizations, which involves strengthening the institutional framework that guarantees participation, establishing permanent consultation processes, and in all cases expanding rather than reducing the possibilities of participating in Assemblies and other OAS events.

We make a special call to address the migration crisis and ensure that migrants can count on the full guarantee of rights in the transit and final reception countries.

The OAS’s mechanisms to alert and defend democracy have not been sufficient. That is the reason we welcome the idea of advancing in the creation of a mechanism to strengthen the inter-American democratic regime that has concrete warning actions, peer review, improvement action plans co-constructed with civil society, the private sector, and academia, and sanctions when democratic stability is seriously affected. Which, unfortunately, seems to be the increasingly permanent trend in the countries of the continent.

1. **COALITION LIFE AND FAMILY. María Elisa Obiols Ordóñez (Sí a la Vida).**

Excellencies Ambassadors and Representatives of the various Member States, Your Excellency Mr. Secretary-General.

As spokesperson for the Coalition Life and Family, I have the honor of representing the will of 79 associations that make it up throughout the continent.

This Coalition has the mission of promoting the right to life and ensuring its unrestricted respect, based on the inherent, universal, equal, and inalienable dignity of the human being.

The dignity of the human being is the principle and foundation on which all his rights are recognized, beginning with the right to life from conception.

The human being in all his stages and regardless of his conditions, is the bearer of this dignity that exalts him and reserves for him the set of most solid guarantees of any legal system that protects human rights. This reality was recognized by States and reflected in the Convention.

That is why we are astonished by the actions of some basic bodies of this Organization, which insist on imposing visions biased by ideologies that are not only alien but also violate human dignity and the laws of the member States.

We refer to the role currently being played by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, betraying the mandate it received in 1959.

In the XXI century, where science advances to such a degree that it allows us to verify the very moment from which the human being exists, the IACHR refuses to recognize the protection of life in the womb, leaving the decision to the will of the woman, who today can arbitrarily decide whether the baby is allowed to live or is condemned to death. This was the position presented by the IACHR in the case of Beatriz v. El Salvador.

This ideologized role is shown in an increasingly undisguised form. In that case, the experts presented and supported by the IACHR denied all dignity to the unborn human being, expressly ignoring international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of the Human Genome.

We have also had to deplore arbitrary behavior on the part of the different Secretariats that make up the structure of the OAS, adopting positions when promoting the activities of Civil Society and silencing the voices that disagree with the ideology assumed and strongly promoted.

Far from contributing to the strengthening of a culture of democratic accountability with the promotion, protection and equality of human rights, this type of behavior significantly weakens and significantly alters the legitimacy of the System vis-à-vis the peoples of the Americas, who helplessly see how the scope of the Convention is manipulated and increasingly betrayed.

This coalition will always work to defend the right to life of every human being, regardless of the stage in which they find themselves or their personal condition. And it will not stop denouncing the abuses and arbitrariness that are committed against this right. Even more so if this attack comes from who should defend it the most.

We therefore urge Member States - and especially you Ambassadors who represent us - to assume the commitment to accompany pregnant women who are in a situation of vulnerability, respecting their dignity but also the dignity of the child they carry in their wombs.

STOP USING THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM TO VIOLATE PEOPLE'S HUMAN RIGHTS! Thanks a lot.

1. **COALITION FOR THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE AMERICAS. Elizabeth Francisca Campos Sánchez (Comisión de Damas Invidentes del Perú - CODIP).**
2. **COALITION FOR VENEZUELA. Ana María Diez (Coalición por Venezuela, Inc.).**

**I join in the protocol greetings to the authorities present.**

It is an honor to address you today in this 53rd General Assembly of the OAS, my first as President of the Coalition for Venezuela.

Being the voice of millions of Venezuelan refugees and migrants is not an easy task, but today it is more necessary than ever. The multifaceted and complex crisis facing **Venezuela is a live, latent crisis,** one that unfortunately is far from over. It is time to address the elephant in the room: **Venezuela has NOT been fixed.**

Therefore, today I want to emphasize in this forum the importance of strengthening regional support for the more than 7 million Venezuelans who have been forced to leave their homeland in search of better opportunities.

We cannot afford to give up now. There is still a long way to go. We must not normalize or underestimate the severity of this crisis. To put it in numbers, according to the latest report from the Inter-Agency Platform R4V, 70% of Venezuelans return due to a lack of integration.

We might think that everyone is returning to Venezuela, but the truth is that currently 9 Venezuelans enter Brazil for everyone that leaves, Colombia has become a transit country, not a place of permanence, and hundreds of Venezuelans continue to pass through the Darien jungle every day. No one told me, I was there just 3 days ago. Venezuela is a revolving door. How many times will they cross unsafe passages? How many lives will we lose? How many children will be left alone?

There is no 'constructed narrative' in Venezuela, but an unquestionable reality. The numbers speak for themselves. Although not as humanitarian as it once was, it is still a crisis, and the levels of inequality in Venezuela are on par with Mozambique and Angola.

In this regard, allow me to highlight **2 main lines of action**:

* **Strengthening regional cooperation**: we must continue to strengthen regional cooperation in spaces like this, based on the principles of solidarity and shared responsibility.
* **But above all, if we truly wish to promote genuinely sustainable and effective policies, it is essential to listen to the voices of the protagonists**, promoting greater participation of refugees and migrants in regional and multilateral spaces. Nothing about us without us must be a premise. Forums like the Quito Process offer an excellent platform to achieve concrete progress in this direction.
* **Increase in financial resources for integration**: The revolving door that Venezuela has become will continue to exhaust all types of support; we must invest in integration. Not as something ethereal, but as a validation of university degrees, trades, support for entrepreneurship, effective regularization, and an end to punitive border closures. Genuine integration allows us to create a home, which is ultimately what we all want.

The International Monetary Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank, the CAF, universities, and other entities have shown the positive impact and projected GDP growth of countries if they integrate migrants. Integration implies development for all, not only because it generates economic growth, but because it is the right thing to do.

We are available for joint work from the Coalition for Venezuela. Thank you very much.

1. **COALITION CITIZEN´S FORUM OF THE AMERICAS. Patricia Gálvez (Centro Ecuatoriano de Desarrollo y Estudios Alternativos - CEDEAL).**

Ladies and gentlemen of the Organization of American States (OAS) and Member States, once again we gather in this edition of the General Assembly, as the Citizen Forum of the Americas, a platform for dialogue, exchange, and civil society advocacy. This marks our seventh participation.

Unfortunately, we see that the concerns and recommendations we bring year after year remain largely the same. Some have evolved, but not because there has been substantial improvement in these issues, but rather because they have worsened. This, at some point, discourages us, but we know that we cannot let our guard down, and our role as civil society is and will continue to be crucial for the construction and strengthening of democracy, as well as the defense and promotion of human rights.

We acknowledge that there is willingness from many actors and social and political agents present here, but we also have to point out that there is little or no willingness from many others. It is our duty to continue demanding that the commitments each state undertakes with its citizens be fulfilled. That, and nothing else, is one of our main roles as civil society.

We know that collaboration and collective work are essential to advance the purposes that have been repeatedly stated in resolutions, commitments, and mandates. Therefore, once again, we urge each and every one of you, ourselves included, to show willingness to work and take concrete actions in the following six areas:

1. Violation of human rights and weakening of the rule of law.
2. Fight against corruption.
3. Participation and influence in the digital era.
4. Gender-based violence.
5. Migration crisis.
6. Environmental and climate crisis.

These are our main concerns at both the hemispheric and national levels of the Citizen Forum. Each of these issues worsens over time, especially the first two, which are closely related to this year's central theme of the General Assembly, titled "Strengthening a Culture of Democratic Responsibility with Promotion, Protection, and Equality of Human Rights in the Americas." This theme has remained very similar since our participation in this hemispheric event, which means that we are all aware that our region has yet to overcome, or at least find the path to, effective solutions.

The violation of human rights and the weakening of the rule of law are constant in the region. Each of our countries experiences this problem in different ways, but we want to emphasize that we are still concerned about the situations in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua. In these three countries, democracy and human rights are either on life support or nonexistent, and therefore, the action of civil society is severely repressed.

However, in the past year, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Peru have joined the ranks of countries experiencing such weakening and violation. Additionally, it is necessary to highlight the political, economic, and/or governance crises that Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico are going through.

Therefore, we make a call to action in this regard to:

* Ensure the protection of actors leading social processes and fighting for the defense of human rights, democracy, and a culture of transparency.
* Promote joint actions with governments to reclaim an open civic space, reversing stigmatization and persecution.
* Recognize the right of civil society to engage in peaceful protest, condemning any act of violence that endangers the lives of those taking to the streets, especially young people and children.
* Guarantee democratic principles for the conduct of free and fair elections throughout the region.
* The region must pressure countries with authoritarian, antidemocratic, and dictatorial tendencies to ensure the human rights of their entire population and the participation and representation of the most vulnerable groups.
* Enact legislation and build public policies that include historically underrepresented population groups, including women, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant communities, religious minority groups, and LGBTIQ+ individuals.

Regarding the fight against corruption, beyond regulatory advancements, it is necessary to implement actions and achieve sustainable results, recognizing the structural and systemic characteristics of this phenomenon and promoting cooperation. It is crucial to have a clear understanding of the link between human rights and corruption, understanding the real implications for the entire population and specific groups, as there are differentiated impacts in this regard.

It is essential to mainstream a gender and diversity perspective in the fight against corruption, with concrete commitments in international agreements and conventions, acknowledging that structural inequality is one of the leading causes of this social problem, as stated in various reports published by the Citizen Observatory of Corruption.

It is imperative and of particular attention to address issues that impact women's human rights. States must ensure specific and prioritized policies and mechanisms to address violence against women based on gender, as well as the alarming increase in femicide cases.

There is an urgent need to safeguard the fulfillment of rights and provide greater opportunities for young people in Latin America, as well as address the situations of violence they face, as they are a vulnerable part of the population but very present in the struggles against human rights violations in general.

We also urge the OAS and the governments of member states to take urgent actions on the mentioned points, especially when addressing the migratory crisis that is already affecting the entire hemisphere, caused precisely by the violation of human rights and the weakening of the rule of law, which we have mentioned.

1. **COALITION ON DRUG POLICIES (CAPD). John Walsh (Washington Office on Latin America - WOLA).**

A year ago, in June 2022, United Nations human rights experts proclaimed that the so-called "war on drugs" undermines health and social well-being and wastes public resources, while failing to eradicate the demand for illegal drugs or the illicit drug market. Additionally, they pointed out that current policies have far-reaching negative implications for access to a broad range of human rights, including the right to:

* + personal freedom;
	+ freedom from forced labor;
	+ freedom from torture and ill-treatment;
	+ a fair trial;
	+ access to health, including treatments and palliative care;
	+ adequate housing and freedom from discrimination;
	+ a clean and healthy environment;
	+ culture and the freedoms of expression, religion, assembly, and association;
	+ and equal treatment under the law.

It is more than evident to us, as citizens and civil society organizations in the Americas, that drug policies focused on prohibition, the criminalization of producers, distributors, and consumers, crop eradication, militarization, and obstructing transit flows have produced counterproductive effects. Despite these policies, drug consumption and trafficking have not decreased in our region. In fact, the urgency to create an America with drug policies based on respect for rights, social justice, and public health is not a new issue. It was raised a decade ago on the hemispheric agenda, as reflected in the OAS Resolution of June 2014 on "Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Search for New Approaches and Effective Solutions in the Development and Implementation of Policies to Address the Global Drug Problem in the Americas."

However, despite some important advances in various countries, the task of promoting and protecting human rights in the Americas regarding drug policies is still in its early stages and requires a renewed commitment from all States in collaboration with civil society.

Therefore, we urge Member States to:

* End repressive drug policies in line with the June 2022 declaration by United Nations human rights experts. We request an end to the criminalization of people who use drugs and respect for the principle of proportionality by establishing alternatives to incarceration and reducing penalties for drug-related offenses, ensuring that imprisonment is only used as a last resort.
* Address problems associated with drug use and dependence from a public health perspective. Universal and voluntary access to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, harm reduction, and social integration services must be guaranteed.
* Ensure the quality of services and provide sufficient resources. We request that more resources be invested in prevention, treatment, harm reduction, education, and rehabilitation with a continuous care perspective and a gender approach.
* Facilitate unrestricted access to health care for individuals deprived of liberty with problematic drug use. Access should be to services similar to those available in their community. Under no circumstances should their legal situation be used as an argument to prevent the initiation or continuation of treatment.
* Do not implement policies that further endanger the lives of indigenous, peasant, and Afro-descendant communities engaged in the cultivation of illicit plants. Reducing violence and establishing new indicators of success for drug policies related to the cultivation of coca, poppy, and cannabis is necessary. New indicators should include the reduction of rural poverty, access to education and basic health care, and the number of legitimate products from peasant areas entering fair markets.

Finally, we urge the OAS Member States, with the full participation of Civil Society, to continue and reopen a broad, inclusive, and taboo-free debate on the design and implementation of drug policies based on a vision anchored in sustainable human development, human rights, and public health, taking into account new experiences and considering the old and new challenges in this field.

Thank you very much.

1. **COALITION INDIGENOUS COORDINATION ABYA YALA. Yordy Yunda Pajoy (Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca Cric-Nacional).**

We salute all of you present today, virtually and in person, for the 53rd General Assembly of the Organization of American States. My voice is the voice of the Coalition Indigenous Coordination Abya Yala, in accordance with the topic of this assembly ***“Strengthening a culture of democratic responsibility with the promotion, protection, and equality of human rights in the Americas”*** and that our collective rights as subjects of rights and our legal personality in our Abya Yala may be implemented through various mechanisms and work groups, as part of the responsibility of every actor in our Abya Yala, therefore we state the following:

 Our profound concern and indignation with the hostile environment or at-risk situation in which our fellow indigenous brothers and sisters live, who have been denouncing constant attacks, harassment, criminalization, and murders for defending their territory as well as to demand our right to self-determination recognized in Article III of the “American Declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples” within the framework of the consent of our peoples.

 In exercising our rights as established in Article XXIX of the declaration, No to megaprojects, nor to the privatization and contamination of water, mining, or logging, or fossil fuels extraction, or genetically modified products, and Yes to the right to a healthy environment that allows for good living standards. As established in Article XVIII, the Right to enjoy a high level of health, one that is **Not** achieved at present and in its absence has generated high rates of maternal mortality among indigenous women due to preventable and treatable diseases. Moreover, many **young girls are becoming mothers** due to a lack of sexual and reproductive health education, breaching the greatest human right.

 Government representatives, the number of indigenous brothers and sisters being murdered is increasing and even for peacefully protesting, as is happening in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, and Guatemala, we demand that repression is ceased and that an investigation and report be carried out by the CIDH in cooperation with our peoples. In the same manner, we demand a cease in the discrimination and marginalization of political rights as is happening in Guatemala and Ecuador

 Considering the aformentioned, we call upon the heads of state and the OAS:

* The implementation and fulfillment of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and its plan of action, approving in this assembly the mechanism or workgroup with financing.
* We reiterate our demand for the representation of indigenous towns within the OAS. For example, through the creation of a permanent American Commission in charge of the rights of indigenous peoples that is exclusively made up of indigenous brothers and sisters, with its own budget.
* We also demand that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Juridical Committee, the Justice Center of the Americas and other international organizations help preserve the lives of Indigenous Peoples' women and men, with full recognition of their normative systems and their governments in accordance with Article XXII of the Declaration, "Indigenous Rights and Jurisdiction".

The Democratic Responsibility of America through the Recognition of a real Plurinational State.

1. **COALITION OF SELF-DETERMINATION OF PEOPLES VS. INSTITUTIONAL CORRUPTION. María Paula Aldana (Género F, A.C.).**
2. **COALITION EDUCATION AND CULTURE FOR DEMOCRACY. Harim Nabi Aquino Santillán (Calacoaya Centro Cultural A.C.).**
3. **YOUNG AMERICAS BUSINESS TRUST**
4. **COALITION OF PERSONS OF AFRICAN DESCENT IN THE AMERICAS. Rosa María Castro Salinas (Afroamérica XXI).**

Honorable State representatives, of the Organization of American States, members of civil society and business present here, on behalf of the Coalition of Persons of African Descent in the Americas, we present:

Once again we are gathered in this space, concerned because we observe the decline of spaces nationwide that serve our population. Likewise, the lack of public policies, affirmative actions, programs, and projects aimed at members of our people, especially our women, youth, older adults, LGBTIQ +, adults, and those who are in mobility, actions that we consider urgent and necessary to face the strong processes of stereotyping, profiling and few opportunities that they are facing.

We continue to highlight the need to improve the statistical data of the Afro-descendant people in a disaggregated manner, reiterating that this data must be included in the administrative data to obtain real, updated, and detailed information, in addition, to be taken into account to generate real investment in the communities, which as a result of COVID continue to be strongly neglected and without focused business initiatives. It is important to understand that investing in our communities and people will generate real progress in our states.

We observe with concern the living conditions of the Dominican-Haitians, who are stateless because they are not Haitian citizens because they were born and culturally Dominican citizens, but regional and international abandonment for being people of African descent is allowing processes of exploitation and modern slavery patterns.

It is a shame that after 10 years of approval of the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance (CIRDI) only 6 countries in the region have ratified it, and of these 6 countries only 1 is from CARICOM.

After the Plan of Action for the Decade for People of African Descent in the Americas (2016-2025) has been drafted and agreed upon, the States have not given real follow-up to the objectives and activities proposed therein.

**Therefore, our recommendations**:

* The urgent signing, ratification, and effective implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Racism – CIRDI
* Hold a High-Level Meeting to Commemorate the X Anniversary of the Approval of CIRDI.
* Generate a working group to follow up on the objectives and activities set out in the Plan of Action for the Decade for People of African Descent in the Americas.
* The creation of the Fund for the Economic Development of People of African Descent in the OAS that responds to our realities and intersectionalities, especially responding to the consequences of COVID.
* *We require* the inclusion of the ethnic/racial variable in the administrative data collected by the countries;
* *We demand* the inclusion of ethnic/racial approaches in local, regional, and national public policies and development plans.
1. **COALITION LGBTTTI+. Suzanna Bridgewater (Woman’s Way Foundation).**

States must assume their responsibility for implementing the treaties they have ratified and comply with the measures and judgements of the Inter-American Human Rights System. We call on all states to adopt Advisory Opinion 24/17 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, both in terms of legal recognition of gender identity and in relation to marriage and families formed by LGBT persons.

We celebrate some advancements in human rights, such as the decriminalization of consensual same-sex relations in Barbados, and that some States have explicitly prohibited the torture practices known as "conversion therapies".

We urge States to repeal laws and end judicial practices that criminalize people with HIV that violate their human rights and will not quell the epidemic.

We demand that States adopt the necessary measures to guarantee the economic, social, cultural and environmental rights of LGBT people, including the specific allocation of budget lines and the compilation of disaggregated data on our living conditions in their statistics.

The number of LGBT people in a situation of human mobility increases daily due to poverty, violence and prejudice, and the various catastrophes caused by climate change. We urge States to adopt a rights-based approach to address the hemisphere's human mobility crisis.

We are alarmed by the advance of conservative forces. Hate speech translates into increased violence against stigmatized groups. We especially request protection for LGBT human rights defenders.

1. **COALITION FOR SOCIETAL PROGRESS. Amalia Villarreal Lozano (Brazos Y Lazos A.C.).**
2. **COALITION BUILDING NEW HORIZONS. Cristian David Badillo Gutiérrez (Fundación en Promoción de la Familia y la Libertad A.C.).**
3. **COALITION HUMAN RIGHTS OF TEENAGERS AND YOUTH IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. Elvira Constantina Pablo Antonio (Colectiva Iranu: Red de Mujeres Jóvenes Indígenas).**

The organizations that form the Coalition of Human Rights of Teenagers and Youth in the Americas recognize the great debt that democracy, as a political system, owes to the region's inequalities and in ensuring that individuals, especially young people, have access to their human rights. We know that democracy is built every day with an organized society that demands its rights, but this is impossible when we live in conditions of violence, discrimination, and inequality.

Recent events such as the 2022 coup in Peru, the social uprisings in Chile and Colombia in 2019 and 2021 respectively, the social protests in the United States against racism and police violence, among other equally important events, show us that there is widespread discontent in the region due to the multiple systems of oppression we face, but also because Latin American governments have been unable to eradicate the consequences of decades of corruption, human rights violations, and abuses. The lack of democracy in these countries has been partly responsible for the aforementioned issues.

In that sense, according to the Democracy Index, the overall average score for Latin America dropped for the fifth consecutive year, from 6.05 in 2019 to 5.99 in 2020. The numbers speak for themselves: in this region, 316 out of the 375 murders of trans and gender-diverse individuals reported worldwide between October 1, 2020, and September 30, 2021, were denounced. Cuba imprisoned 3 journalists in 2021, more than any other country in the Americas, followed by Nicaragua (2) and Brazil (1). We had 252 homicides in 2021, making the region the deadliest for human rights defenders, with Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil being the most lethal countries[[2]](#footnote-2). Regarding gender-based violence, in 2021, at least 4,473 women were victims of femicide in 29 countries and territories in the region, representing at least 12 violent deaths of women due to gender-related reasons[[3]](#footnote-3).

Taking into account the conditions of violence and inequality in which we live, we demand a democracy that goes beyond political parties, ideologies, and governmental structures. We demand a democracy built by citizen power and the recognition of the population's rights, in addition to having anti-racist, anti-patriarchal, anti-colonial, and anti-capitalist principles that are necessary to guarantee that diverse populations can live with justice and well-being. In that sense, to achieve true democracy, it is necessary for states to guarantee the fulfillment of human rights, with attention to citizen participation, and to promote, together with the population, the co-creation of policies and plans to address the structural causes of inequality by allocating budgets for their implementation.

On the other hand, it is necessary for civil society advocating for human rights to participate in the construction and strengthening of this democracy, and for there to be no setbacks in their participation in national, regional, and international spaces, as their contributions are evidence-based and therefore indispensable for building a new reality based on social justice for the entire region. In addition to the above, it is necessary to avoid setbacks in the agreed-upon language and in national, regional, and international human rights instruments because it is always the obligation of states to respect, protect, and guarantee access to them.

Young people in Latin America and the Caribbean not only demand that our governments redouble their efforts to protect and guarantee our rights and establish democratic political systems that take into account the specific needs of all individuals, but we also express our willingness to work together in designing public policies and legislation that allow us to achieve a democracy that works for everyone.

1. **COALITION DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND POLITICAL RENEWAL. Rosa María Payá Acevedo (Fundación para la Democracia Panamericana).**

Democracy and the protection of Human Rights continue to regress in our continent. Authoritarianisms in Latin America are advancing, keeping more than fifteen hundred people in political prison, according to updated figures. Among its most recognized victims are José Daniel Ferrer García in Cuba, Ermirlendris Benítez in Venezuela, Monsignor Rolando Álvarez in Nicaragua and former constitutional president Jeanine Añez in Bolivia. As stated by the Democratic Governance group meeting at the IX Summit of the Americas, members of civil society urge all OAS member states to eliminate all forms of political violence and the immediate release of all persons deprived of liberty for political reasons in all countries.

 The origin of the systematic violation of human rights is to be found in the Cuban dictatorship. The regime in Havana has been persecuting, imprisoning and murdering its political opponents for more than 60 years. In fact, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Report No. 357/22 of Case 14.196 "Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas et al. Cuba," which investigated the deaths of human rights defenders Oswaldo Payá and Harold Cepero, concluded that "there is serious and sufficient evidence to conclude that State agents were involved in the deaths of Mr. Payá and Mr. Cepero.

 The Cuban model of repression has been exported to other countries in the region and has been a decisive factor in the collapse of democracy in Venezuela and Nicaragua. The practice of expatriating political prisoners and other exiles - as the Ortega and Murillo dictatorship did in February of this year - has been carried out for decades by the Cuban regime, as witnessed by the thousands of Cubans who have been left stateless with an "annulled" stamp in their passport.

Human Rights violations in Venezuela are real, they are not a narrative as indicated by President Lula da Silva. There too, the Cuban regime exported its model of repression. This was reported in the report of the independent international fact-finding mission of the United Nations which indicated that "*several former officials of the DGCIM told the Mission that agents of the Cuban State have instructed, advised and participated in intelligence and counter-intelligence activities with the DGCIM. The Mission also reviewed confidential written agreements between the Governments of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Cuba, which formally granted the Cuban Government a role in the restructuring of Venezuelan military counterintelligence services and the training of officers. These agreements date back to 2006 and the cooperation would continue*".

 It is time for the democracies of the Americas to unite against dictators. We endorse the Declaration of the Democratic Governance Group at the IX Summit of the Americas and reinforce the call to the States gathered in this General Assembly to condemn dictatorships and take the following actions to promote the right to democracy of the peoples of the Americas:

1. To demand that the State of Cuba adopt the recommendations of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in its report No. 357/22 in case 14.196 "Oswaldo Payá Sardinas et al. Cuba".
2. To eliminate all forms of political violence and the immediate release of all persons deprived of liberty for political reasons in all countries, particularly in Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia.
3. To urge them to participate genuinely in the definitive solution of the Haitian crisis without affecting their sovereignty.
4. Denounce the State terrorism and crimes against humanity of the Cuban regime. Stop making concessions to the Cuban dictatorship and take action in support of the Cuban people's right to democracy as established in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.
5. Urge the government of Mexico to cease narratives and actions that threaten the autonomy of electoral bodies and the physical integrity of their officials.
6. Use all available tools, including the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, to address the threat posed by the Cuban regime. The Cuban dictatorship must continue to be excluded from the international forums of the Organization of American States until it complies with the Inter-American Democratic Charter.
7. **COALITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL ORDER. Omayra Álvarez Fricá (Juventud Con Una Misión Santo Domingo).**
8. **COALITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN THE AMERICAS. María Teresa Blandón (Asociación de Mujeres Nuestra Voz).**

The organizations that form the Coalition of Human Rights of Women in the Americas **EXHORT** the member states of the General Assembly to prioritize public policies and allocate the necessary efforts to urgently and without further delay adopt guarantees for the full exercise of human rights of women and girls in all their diversity, without exclusion of any kind.

**MEMBER STATES**, we alert you that in order to strengthen a culture of democratic responsibility, we must be able to live without any type of violence, with respect for our autonomy, with access to sexual and reproductive health, including comprehensive sexuality education (ESI), contraception, and safe abortion services. Governments must include and implement policies with equality and without discrimination in all areas of social, political, economic, and cultural life in our countries.

The decision of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of Beatriz represents the possibility of guaranteeing the right to abortion, freedom, and dignity. **Because justice for Beatriz is justice for all.**

The CEDAW Committee and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, have emphasized the responsibility of States to ensure that normative and judicial systems guarantee women and girls who are victims of sexual violence access to justice without stigmatizing or blaming them. We note that in recent years, more than 80,000 girls between the ages of 10 and 14 have become pregnant and given birth as a result of rape and are victims of forced marriages.

Femicide violence is also increasing: the countries with the highest femicide rates are El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, and Mexico. In El Salvador, there were 64 femicides, while Argentina has had 129 femicides, 2 trans femicides, and 14 linked femicides so far this year. In Ecuador, 122 femicides were recorded in the first four months of the year. Furthermore, from 2014 to date, there have been 1,503 violent deaths of women due to gender-based reasons. In Colombia, there were 259 femicides in 2022, and as of June 6th of the current year, 128 femicides have been committed.

Last year in Peru, there were 3,493 cases of people with disabilities assisted in Gender-Based Violence Emergency Centers, of which 72.4% were women with disabilities.

Regarding sex workers, they are sometimes considered "incapable" of making decisions about their bodies. They lack access to healthcare and face stigmas and discrimination, often subjected to medical treatments or interventions without consent, violating their privacy and sexual autonomy.

The situation of indigenous women's lives in Latin America has been marked by a series of oppressions derived from patriarchal, colonial, racist, and capitalist systems. These systems restrict access to dignified living conditions for women, hindering the full enjoyment of their rights, affecting the integral development of indigenous women, their organizations, and communities, and disregarding their needs from an intersectional perspective.

Human rights and reproductive rights defenders face risks of criminalization, threats, attacks, displacement, and, in the worst cases, killings. According to data from the Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders, in 2022, at least 4,803 aggressions were recorded in Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, including 20 murders. States are the main perpetrators of these aggressions. Therefore, we demand that they guarantee the safety and lives of human rights defenders, reproductive rights defenders, environmental defenders, and territorial defenders.

In a context of increasing populist and authoritarian governments in Central America, we denounce the closing of civic spaces, systematic attacks on freedom of expression, association, and mobilization, as well as arbitrary detentions.

**Therefore, we insist**: To strengthen our culture of democratic responsibility, it is urgent to promote and protect human rights. This will only be possible if we dismantle the oppressions in the lives of women.

1. **COALITION FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. Luis Antonio Martínez Guzmán (Human Life International).**

Democracy, the power of the people, is not a process that can be imposed from above. The consolidation of a nation is given by cultural and community ties, in the search for a common goal. These ties are transmitted from the welcome that a woman gives to a new human being in her womb; we perceive these ties in the simplicity of the home, in the teaching of our parents, in the lap of the family, in the intergenerationality of the dreams of the people. To speak of democracy, excluding the family from the discussion or considering it a regressive measure, is to speak of a democracy without content, because the family is the place where the intergenerational bonds of culture cohere; and what democracy could exist without the people or what nation could cohere without the family?

Secondly, the Coalition for Human Development affirms the fundamental dignity of every human person, from fertilization to natural death. Human dignity, and its inherent rights, is the oxygen in the organism of democracy.

To affirm human dignity is to consciously reflect on the great difference implicit in no longer calling someone a disabled one, but a person with a disability; and to repeat that same substantive change with people from all excluded groups. Addressing vulnerability and exclusion from the point of view of dignity and fraternity, moves us away from ideologization and brings us closer to Democratic Governance. To affirm dignity is also to call that conceived human being a person, and to affirm his or her existence and life, as if it were one's own life, even when that person is in a prenatal stage of development or when someone believes he or she has reasons to exclude him or her. It would be illogical to recognize the difference in all other groups and deny it in the latter. Such is the presupposition of democracy: the encounter with the most vulnerable, and the pulverization of the culture of discarding. There is something in common between the Holocaust, Apartheid, and slavery in America: the intrinsic dignity of every human being was eclipsed by supremacist ideologies, which gave some more value than others.

I conclude, Honorable Delegations, by urgently requesting your vote in favor of Commissioners Stuardo Ralón and Pier Pigozzi for the IACHR. To paraphrase them, *the adversarial approach, the delegitimization of those who think differently and the exclusion of interested parties in dialogues relevant to the region, must give way in favor of generative and appreciative dialogue, understanding and the de-ideologization of positions, for the construction of the common ideal that the nations of the Americas deserve.* Any exclusion, pressure, or detriment of horizontality, in favor of interpretative biases or ideologies, of terms that are not very frank, with a bottom of iceberg not made explicit, would lead us to top-down impositions, lacking democratic bases and respect for the diversity of the region. The persistence of these methodologies feeds a potential crisis of legitimacy in the System.

Let us replant the tree of our democracies with solid roots, based on the family and the dignity of every human person, from conception.

God bless America.

1. **COALITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS OF THE AMERICAS. Gloria Margarita Cano Legua (Asociación Pro-Derechos Humanos - APRODEH).**

From the Coalition of Human Rights Organizations of the Americas, we express our concern about three issues.

First, the ongoing **deterioration of democratic institutions and its impact on human rights** in member countries of the OAS. Specifically, we are concerned about the weakening of the role of the judiciary in upholding constitutional rights and human rights, attacks on electoral systems, and the separation of powers, as demonstrated by the recent crises in Peru, where the excessive use of force has resulted in dozens of deaths and hundreds of injured individuals. We also draw attention to the serious situation of justice operators in Guatemala and raise awareness of the diminishing guarantees for the development of general, free, and fair elections.

Second, we express our concern about the harassment and persecution of members of civil society, repression of protests, and the situation of **human rights defenders** in various countries, including Venezuela, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, and Ecuador. Defenders of the environment, sexual and reproductive rights, women's rights, children and youth, LGBTQIA+ individuals, justice operators, indigenous and Afro-descendant leaders, communicators, and journalists have been particularly affected. They continue to be victims of attacks, threats, surveillance, disinformation campaigns, stigmatization, criminalization, forced displacement, and even murder for their defense work. In Nicaragua, there have been cases of stripping individuals of their nationality, leading to statelessness. Given this context, we urge states to ratify the Escazú Agreement and ensure its implementation to protect environmental defenders, take measures to guarantee the right to defend rights, investigate threats and killings of defenders, and establish appropriate mechanisms for their protection.

Third, we urge states to reaffirm their commitment to the effective functioning of the **Inter-American System**, pledging to promote internal processes that guarantee nominees for positions in Inter-American Human Rights bodies meet the requirements already approved by states, including high moral standing, recognized knowledge in human rights, independence, impartiality, representative and geographically balanced integration, and gender parity. Withdrawal of nominations should be explained based on non-compliance with these requirements. Lastly, we express deep concern about measures that have limited the participation of civil society in OAS spaces and call for its strengthening.

1. **COALITION YOUTH AND LIBERTIES. María Camila Ospina (Nueva Democracia).**

My name is María Camila Ospina, I am here representing The Coalition of Youth And Liberties, that unites more than 50 youth organizations in the whole continent and represents thousands of people who have signed the Youth Declaration.

For many years now but particularly in the most recent years, we have seen how the Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights has been completely losing its nature and purpose.

A system that was created by sovereign States to fulfill the very important function of guarding and setting the standard in the protection of our fundamental rights, has gradually become a financed NGO with particular interests, an activist organization that defends a specific ideological agenda, that exceeds its functions and that discriminates against the majority of the american population: that doesn’t share its vision of the world.

The Inter-American System has completely lost its way. In the context of a continent with the highest rates of violence, insecurity, hunger, lack of education and health, to name a few, the system is focused on promoting a progressive agenda and persecuting religious groups under the excuse of “non-discrimination”. Nevertheless, it is the same system that discriminates and constantly silences any dissenting voices, as has happened with the comissioners Carlos Bernal and Edgar Ralón. Just as today in this precinct, there was given privilege to the entrance of certain groups while others entrances were limited. As evidenced in the clearly radical and partial position of the commission in the case of Beatriz vs. El Salvador, in favor of abortion or in the case of Pavez Vs. Chile, against religious freedom.

But how can we be surprised by this, when the General Assembly of the OAS is convened with the idea of promoting and protecting human rights but we haven't even reached an agreement on what is human or a “human right?” We have been convened upon quicksand. Under the idea that everything is relative and that individual freedoms have no limits, the system has moved us to a position of great risk:

* It erases the biological truth of being a woman, making invisible the struggle that women have faught for decades, even arguing that being a woman is nothing and anyone can be one.
* In the name of rights it manipulates and utilizes the innocence of children in support of an aimless gender agenda, that doesn’t even consider the true well-being of children.
* It discriminates and violates the rights of all those who profess a religion, excluding them from debate and decision spaces.
* It makes invisible and completely ignores the unborn and those who are inconvenient for their agenda, just as it happened with Leilani in the case Beatriz vs. El Salvador.
* Furthermore, promotes the use of laws to silence or reprimand individuals who peacefully share or express their convictions, in a clear violation of freedom of speech, imposing a “tolerance” without limit and without rules.
* And looks the other way while people in countries like Nicaragua are persecuted for their political convictions, for their faith and their conscience.

Ambassadors, to subordinate the dignity of people and their consequent ability to exercise fundamental human rights to the will or convenience of some, is the antithesis of human rights in their deepest essence. The human rights system, as we know it today, was born of the complete opposite idea: we all have rights simply because we ARE human. It was born from the will to integrate and not to discriminate or differentiate. It was born from the intention of not creating unfounded excuses to leave some people out, but to recognize us all as equal in dignity and therefore in rights.

Gentlemen, we all have human rights because of our dignity, not because of our belonging to a group or collective.

Human rights already exist. They were not created; they were recognized as a direct consequence of our dignity. Let us respect and guarantee those that already exist. Those for which our sovereign states gave their consent. Those that have allowed the development of our nations. Those that are violated in our countries and that need to be respected and guaranteed for our true well-being.

Your decisions are shaping the world we live in, they are forming and transforming the societies of the future, where we young people will have to develop our lives. Do not this great responsibility lightly.

1. **COALITION OF HUMAN MOBILITY IN THE AMERICAS. Leonel Asdrúbal Dubón Bendfeldt (El Refugio de la Niñez).**

In the Coalition of Human Mobility in the Americas, we are concerned about the context of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced persons, and returnees who are in conditions of vulnerability, accentuated by differential aspects such as age, ethnic and racial origin, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, disability condition and poverty itself.

Therefore, we request the States to:

1. Comply with its commitments established in the instruments of international human rights law and international refugee law, including the regional definition of the Cartagena Declaration of 1984, and not sign agreements, bilateral or multilateral, contrary to these rights. Guarantee, without discrimination and in accordance with international standards, the right of each person to leave their country, the right to seek and receive asylum, access to other complementary forms of international protection, as well as facilitate safe mechanisms for migratory regularization, guarantee the principle and right of non-refoulement, the prohibition of rejection at the border and collective expulsions.

2. There are more and more people in need of international protection in the Americas, so it is important to implement actions to improve and strengthen national refugee and asylum systems in accordance with international and inter-American standards and based on an intersectional perspective. It is a duty to guarantee the effective enjoyment of rights of persons seeking refuge and refugees.

3. Refrain from the use of securitarian and restrictive border policies that violate the rights of migrants and in need of international protection, mainly children, adolescents, women, LGBTQ+ people, Afro-descendants and indigenous people, who are the potential victims of criminal networks through crimes such as illicit smuggling of migrants, human trafficking, sexual violence and even death.

4. Guarantee access to truth, justice and reparation for migrant victims of serious human rights violations and their families, through transnational mechanisms and the coordination of countries of origin, transit and migratory destination.

Finally, we request progress in regional and coordinated responses, from the guarantee of human rights and the principle of co-responsibility among States, ensuring mechanisms for the active participation of civil society, migrant organizations, and other allies. The context requires the States to consider the elaboration of a Convention on Human Mobility in the Americas, also taking advantage of the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration and allowing a better response to the causes and new challenges of the growing forced migration and the need for protection in the continent.

1. **COALITION OF RELIGIONS, BELIEFS AND SPIRITUALITIES IN THE DIALOGUE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY. Nicolas Panotto (Grupo de Estudios Multidisciplinarios sobre religión e incidencia pública).**

Dear representatives of permanent missions and civil society:

Within the framework of the motto that convenes this dialogue and assembly, as a coalition, we question the role and contribution of religions and spiritualities in strengthening a democratic and egalitarian culture. On the one hand, these elements represent a debt within the religious field itself. In our region, there still exist discourses and practices that stigmatize, discriminate against, and violate the rights of many groups and individuals belonging to religious minorities, while there are policies and legal frameworks that benefit majority sectors. The approach to religious matters itself needs to be democratized, emphasizing the plurality of expressions that coexist in our territories.

On the other hand, we notice the existence of religious groups that actively participate in the violation of rights and democratic practices. They do so by intervening or obstructing legal frameworks and public policies that benefit broader population sectors, promoting hate speech, or taking positions in public debates from a place of privilege and exclusivity, undermining the principles of diversity inherent to any democratic proposal.

Nevertheless, we are convinced that there are countless religious and spiritual groups that contribute positively to democratic coexistence by engaging in civil society activism, advocating for the opening rather than the restriction of rights, and defending a notion of religious freedom that is respectful and collaborative with other freedoms. That is what equality is about, and we believe these voices need to be made visible to strengthen a democratic environment that recognizes the religious-spiritual dimension.

In light of all this, we urge the participants in this dialogue, as well as the member states, to consider the following:

* First, that this body maintains and promotes cooperation, exchange, and dialogue with the diversity of religious and spiritual perspectives that are part of this space and our countries. This will limit the current monopoly of certain religious voices that aspire to set the agenda and restrict other voices, particularly regarding practices of abuse, violence, discrimination, and negligence, and will allow us to listen to the richness of spiritualities and religiosities, especially those that contribute to the demands of women, the LGBTQ+ community, youth, Afro-descendant groups, and indigenous communities.
* Second, we insist that the resolution on freedom of religion and conscience is a powerful tool that this body has to achieve this goal. Furthermore, this resolution opens the possibility for a broader debate about its composition, making it more accessible to the inclusion of other voices, particularly diverse spiritualities and a rights-based understanding of beliefs.
* Third, we believe that states have much to do to improve the relationship between religion and democracy, especially in the public sphere. There is a need to expand dialogue and cooperation with different religious perspectives so that the same voices do not always dominate the debate. We need more secularism (i.e., greater separation between state and church) to build more fruitful bridges between society, politics, and spiritualities. We also need substantial improvements in our legal frameworks, so that the guarantee of religious freedom ceases to be instrumentalized for the benefit of certain groups and, on the contrary, becomes a principle that includes and acknowledges the place of beliefs and spiritualities for the common good. Finally, we need educational and training spaces to stop being co-opted to promote catechetical agendas or values belonging to particular groups, and instead embrace an intercultural, interreligious, and intersectional perspective.

Thank you very much.

1. **COALITION ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS. Dona Da Costa Martinez (Hondurans Against AIDS).**

Honourable Secretary, Member States, colleagues from civil society.

This Coalition wishes to urge the member states to promote and protect equality and human rights, as well as the dignity of all people without any distinction, exclusion or discrimination.

Sexual and reproductive rights is a significant aspect of human rights. Strengthening a culture of democratic responsibility implies respecting, promoting and guaranteeing these rights. Sadly however, there is a large gap in the region between the letter of the law and its implementation.

Honourable Secretary and representatives of Member States, in LAC, high prevalence rates of violence, including sexual violence, experienced by women from their partners throughout their lives vary by country, but always in levels of pandemic.

Latin America and the Caribbean ranks second among the world regions for its adolescent pregnancy rate. Every year in the region, five out of every 100 pregnancies occur in children under 20 years of age, many as a result of rape, and 2 million children are born to young mothers between the ages of 15 and 19. The Dominican Republic and Guyana have the highest rates of unintended teenage pregnancies in the Caribbean, whilst Bolivia and Venezuela have the highest rates in South America.

In most countries of the Caribbean, the age of consent is 16. Yet, the Caribbean context is marked by early sexual debut with a mean age of 14 years for the first sexual encounter. (Allen, 2013; WHO/GSHS, 2017). Navigating access to sexual and reproductive health services is a major hindrance for sexually active young persons, along with legal barriers and sociocultural barriers produce a judgement-laden and shame-based environment.

1 in 4 girls is forced to marry or establish an early union on this continent. Girls and women, **in all their diversities**, are most impacted by poverty.

Although many Caribbean countries have frameworks for health and family life education, there are concerns regarding the quality and content, as well as the level of implementation of these curricula, as they do not sufficiently address the need for Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). On the other hand, in the countries of the Americas where there are regulations on CSE, it does not reach every girl and adolescent.

Our region bears the shame and pain of deaths from unsafe abortions that have destroyed the lives of women and their families. Unsafe abortion continues to be a serious public health concern in most countries. Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Curacao, Dominica, Haiti, United States, Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Maarten, Trinidad and Tobago have restrictive abortion laws, **whilst 7 countries totally prohibit abortion: the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Suriname, El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti and Jamaica.**

Representatives of the member states, we kindly ask that you take into account the obligations enshrined under International Law, and the urgent need to comply with the principles of progressiveness and universality of human rights for all people, as a means of strengthening **weakened democracies**.

Finally, we want to invite the State missions to hold an election for new Commissioners of the IACHR that responds to the inter-American tradition of respect for fundamental rights, including sexual and reproductive rights. We hope that, regardless of your ideological positions, the votes you cast at the end of this Assembly reflect the commitments you acquired as signatories to the Inter-American Convention.

Thank you so much.

1. **COALITION ON FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE AND EXPRESSION. Rodrigo Iván Cortés Jiménez (Tlalok-Tlakaj A.C.).**

My name is Rodrigo Iván Cortés, and I am addressing you on behalf of the Coalition on Freedom of Conscience and Expression.

Dear ambassadors, first of all, I would like to bring to your attention the systematic violation of the right to freedom of expression taking place in Mexico, Nicaragua, Cuba, Chile, and Venezuela. I want to emphasize my case before the Mexican electoral courts as a clear example of this.

I am a civil society activist, and as such, I inform citizens about the bills presented in Congress. On September 21, 2022, I published tweets and videos on social media criticizing someone whom the Mexican electoral body obliges me to call Salma Luévano, a congresswoman of the National Congress, for presenting a bill that illegitimately restricted the right to religious freedom. Luévano filed a complaint against me before the Mexican electoral courts, who sanctioned me for "gender-based political violence," a concept established by Mexican legislation that, due to its ambiguity and lack of specificity, undermines the guarantees of freedom of expression enshrined in the Pact of San Jose.

Gentlemen, being sanctioned for expressing my opinion regarding a member of Congress is a flagrant violation of the right to freedom of expression. Through the creation of the concept of "gender-based political violence," Mexico sanctions citizens who express disagreement with ideas promoted from positions of authority.

I am not the only one who has been sanctioned under this unjust law. Congressman Gabriel Quadri has also been sanctioned by the same Mexican courts when he defended gender parity protection in the Mexican Congress through tweets. Likewise, Congresswoman Teresa Castell was sanctioned for referring to a member of Congress as a "man."

We all have the right to express our ideas without fear of retaliation by the state. Mexicans have the right to disseminate their way of thinking and to disagree with our peers and authorities. **OAS member states, dissenting is not discriminating, and international human rights law protects the right of Mexicans to dissent from the state.**

Secondly, I will address the human rights crisis in Nicaragua and the countries of the Americas.

This General Assembly cannot ignore the systematic violation of the right to religious freedom occurring today in Nicaragua. **This is the first religious persecution of this century in our continent,** and to ignore it would be to disregard the fundamental human rights established in the Pact of San Jose and all international human rights instruments.

The OAS must firmly declare that the acts of violence, repression, imprisonment, and intimidation by the Nicaraguan government **against members of the Catholic Church** constitute a systematic violation of the right to religious freedom and, as stated by the UN Group of Experts on Human Rights in Nicaragua, prima facie, the crime against humanity of persecution.

**Gentlemen, without religious freedom in Nicaragua, there is no freedom in the Americas. We are all Nicaragua!**

1. **COALITION FOR THE RIGHTS OF SEX WORKERS. María Lucila Esquivel (Asociación Mujeres Trabajadoras Sexuales del Paraguay "Unidas en la Esperanza").**

Good morning,

We want to bring to this Assembly the discussion about the situation of people engaged in sex work in the Latin America and Caribbean region. We know that none of the countries in Latin America criminalize sex work, and only some English-speaking Caribbean countries still have colonial laws that criminalize it. In fact, some countries do provide formal recognition of sex work in specific legislations, such as police regulations or municipal norms. The justice systems of some countries, like Colombia, have categorically stated, demanding that the rest of the state respect our rights.

However, people engaged in sex work continue to be illegally and arbitrarily detained, abused, humiliated, extorted, and discriminated against in all countries without exception. The Latin American and Caribbean Network of Sex Workers has documented over 2,500 cases of human rights violations in 15 countries, which demonstrates how institutions continue to violate our rights without any legal basis and with total impunity. Particularly, the security forces, as well as the health, justice, and labor regulation systems.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights issued Advisory Opinion 27/21 on trade union freedom, collective bargaining, and strikes. The Court establishes that states have a duty to adapt their legislation to respect the labor rights of all individuals without discrimination. Furthermore, it states that states must take measures to facilitate the transition of stigmatized groups into the formal economy so that discrimination is not an obstacle to the exercise of their rights. Sex workers are explicitly mentioned among these groups.

This lack of regulation by states regarding sex work also violates international instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, as well as the San Salvador Protocol and the Belém do Pará Convention in the Inter-American System.

The first step to solving all the problems mentioned is the regulation of sex work like any other occupation. This Assembly should condemn the exercise of any type of violence by states towards people engaged in sex work and demand the guarantee of enjoying our rights.

Considering all that has been mentioned, we request:

The immediate creation of a rapporteur-ship that can promote, through investigation and evidence gathering, the drafting of necessary resolutions to cease the violation of human rights of people engaged in sex work, thus "**Contributing to the Strengthening of a Culture of Democratic Responsibility with the Promotion, Protection, and Equality of Human Rights in the Americas.**"

Sex work is work.

1. **COALITION IBERO-AMERICAN EVANGELICAL CONGRESS. Diana Carolina Rodríguez Ruíz (Fundación Bendice al Prójimo).**
2. **COALITION FOR AN INTER-AMERICAN LABORATORY ON POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INNOVATION. Beatriz Borges (Centro de Justicia y Paz - CEPAZ).**

**Distinguished delegates and representatives,**

We address you with urgency and determination on behalf of the Coalition for an Inter-American Laboratory for Political and Social Innovation. We demand from the international community a firm commitment to the democratic re-institutionalization in Venezuela.

It is crucial that coordinated multilateral action be carried out to guarantee human rights, promote justice and build peace, from a focus on transparency and political innovation that provides multisectoral solutions to the country. The situation in Venezuela has reached a critical point and it is our responsibility to act jointly and decisively. We are concerned about speeches or statements that point to a normalization and appeasement of the crisis that is not real.

That is why we urge foreign ministries, presidents, legislators, and the entire international community to adopt a human rights-based approach when establishing mechanisms for communication and cooperation with the Venezuelan authorities. This approach provides us with diplomatic tools to avoid polarizing language and build dialogues based on facts and on the reports of international human rights protection organizations that have been elaborated within the Inter-American system and the United Nations system. It is necessary to design strategies to approach Venezuela anchored in the recommendations of these organizations, which establish the parameters and indicators to measure the real cooperation of the government and the process of democratic re institutionalization in the country.

We urge States and the international community to support dialogue and negotiation also based on the recognition and respect of human rights, and on the demands of the Venezuelan population for democracy, justice, and truth. Only in this way can we reach a peaceful and democratic solution to the crisis that the country is going through. Following international human rights standards is critical to preventing serious human rights violations from going unpunished and causing even more harm to the population.

It is necessary to build a sustainable and lasting peace in Venezuela, supporting Venezuelan civil society organizations, which face persecution and closure of civic space. We also demand the holding of free and authentic elections in Venezuela, recovering the right to political participation without discrimination or persecution.

Justice must be a priority, carrying out independent investigations and genuine trials against all those involved in the atrocities committed.

It is essential to protect the migrant and refugee population, providing humanitarian assistance and implementing migration policies based on human rights.

We need regional leadership committed to democratic re-institutionalization in Venezuela.

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the restoration of democracy in Venezuela. The path to democratic re institutionalization will require concerted efforts, but it is our duty to work together for a future of peace and justice in Venezuela.

Thanks you very much!

1. **COALITION FOR ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND RULE OF LAW**. **Manuel Acosta (Global Center for Human Rights).**

**Excellencies,**

For this coalition, the defense of the rule of law is essential to access true justice. That is why we consider it a priority for the organization and the institutions that comprise it to faithfully respect the obligations agreed upon by the states. These obligations not only give them origin but also establish their competencies, resulting in a functional framework that, when strictly observed, lends credibility to their decisions.

The topic for which we were convened raises several reflections related to the democratic system and the promotion, protection, and equality of human rights.

To talk about human rights is to address the essential issues concerning the human person, those that make them unique and irreplaceable, such as human dignity, on which the natural rights of every human being are founded. Recognizing this is essential to safeguarding the rights of individuals against arbitrary decisions by authorities or the government.

The purpose of the American Convention was to enshrine these rights in order to establish a clear and unquestionable reference of inalienable rights for individuals. This legal framework exists not only to be respected by states and individuals but also by the organizations and institutions responsible for upholding the Convention, namely rights that must be respected by the OAS and its institutions, primarily the IACHR, the IACtHR, the CIM, etc. The inter-American system was not established to create rights but to respect the rights recognized by the Convention.

With concern, we see that these institutions have forgotten the legal framework that has been provided to them and has arbitrarily become instruments of ideological agendas that have nothing to do with respect for the nature of the individual and their dignity.

One emblematic case is the performance of the IACHR before the IACtHR in the hearing held in the case of Beatriz against El Salvador, where it disregarded the fact that there is a human being in the maternal womb. Would it be good if it answered, if it is not a human being, what is it? An animal? An object? And when does the magical moment occur when "that" transforms into a human being?

If an organ established to defend human rights and boasting about it is not capable of recognizing the moment when a human being exists, we are entrusting the noblest task to those who disregard the right to life of the weakest of the weak, someone who has no voice to defend themselves, the human being in the womb of their mother. This is not an ideological or religious issue, as some have claimed; it is a scientific reality.

Secondly, referring to the strengthening of democratic responsibility.

One of the main pillars of this Organization is democracy, as reaffirmed in the preamble of the American Convention, which emphasizes the need to respect democratic institutions.

Well, democracy cannot be respected when this Organization and its institutions attempt to disregard the authority given by the people to their legitimate representatives and governments. In recent years, the IACHR and the IACtHR, under the pretext of establishing supposed inter-American standards, unilaterally grant themselves binding effects that they seek to replace or substitute for what was agreed upon in the Convention and expressly agreed upon by the States.

This quasi-legislative function exercised by these institutions disregards the principles they purport to defend and, by being invasive, renders their decisions illegitimate, causing them to lose credibility.

1. **COALITION FOR AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE. Liliana Gutiérrez Pánfilo (Fundación Guadalupe Nájera).**

DEMOCRACY AND POVERTY IN THE AMERICAS: A MAJOR CHALLENGE

In the Coalition for an Inclusive Economy with Social Justice, we believe that talking about democracy while there are so many inequalities in the hemisphere is challenging. It is difficult as long as citizens' human rights are not guaranteed, because if people in the Americas are poor, it is because their rights are not ensured, such as the right to a dignified life, a decent salary, or decent work. They also lack a legal framework that guarantees their rights in case they are self-employed or informal traders. According to data published by the UN, "Around 2 billion people are employed in the informal sector of the economy. The International Labour Organization states that transitioning to a formal economy is necessary to achieve the goal of decent work outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals."

The informal economy manifests in two simultaneous aspects: self-employment with informal trading in public spaces and precarious, unregulated work without social coverage or tax declaration, among other regulatory shortcomings.

Therefore, we recommend the following:

Repealing laws, regulations, and bylaws that criminalize informal trading and replacing them with laws that have a human rights approach.

However, there is a lack of legal tools, political will, and institutional strength to formalize these activities.

Where should we start?

To "formalize the economy”, we need to consider minimum wages and the quality of employment, regulate trading in the spaces of the employers, and review member states' legal framework and labor policies. Then, we can recommend improvements by updating norms and policies to address unemployment and precarious work.

The aim is to ensure legitimate livelihoods, strengthen the family economy, improve working conditions, abolish the persecution and criminalization of street vendors, and, from a human rights perspective, enhance the quality of life in the continent.

1. **INDIGENOUS NATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS COALITION. Heraclio Hugo Tacuri Huamaní (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Perú - CONAIP).**

As representatives of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, we once again remind all delegations of the General Assembly of the OAS that the Indigenous peoples of the Americas (Abya Yala) are completely different from civil society organizations. We would also like to remind everyone here today that the situation of Indigenous peoples continues to worsen. Our leaders are criminalized, our communities suffer high levels of poverty, mega-projects contaminate our sources of livelihood, and consultation protocols continue to be ignored.

But today, we will not repeat what we have been declaring for decades. Today, we want to extend our gratitude to the government of Guatemala, the OAS, and the PAHO for implementing part of the 2017 Action Plan, which called for a meeting to explore a monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted in 2016.

The Indigenous representatives who attended, despite being concerned about the potential outcome, reached a consensus with the state delegations, which is a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. We hope that this proposed mechanism will be approved by this General Assembly in the coming days.

Moving forward with this proposed mechanism, and with the full commitment of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, we can at least affirm that we are acting collectively to realize the fundamental human rights of Indigenous peoples, based on the recognition of the specific rights of Indigenous peoples enshrined in the Declaration and in the proposed mechanism for their realization.

For us, the Declaration, the Action Plan, and the proposed mechanism for monitoring the full and proactive implementation of the Declaration by governments are key to our collective success and well-being.

However, to achieve the greatest possible success, we call on the member states, including Canada and the United States, to actively participate in supporting the Declaration and its Action Plan, as well as the initiatives to be undertaken by the proposed Working Group. This includes providing financial resources for the Working Group to carry out its mandate. This must be a priority.

We are confident that the member states of the General Assembly will take a firm stance, supporting the establishment of the Working Group and fully participating in its work.

Thank you.

1. **COALITION OF COMMUNITIES OF AFRICAN DESCENT. Hernando Viveros Cabezas (Comunidad Afrodescendiente de Santiago de Cali).**

Mr. Secretary General of the Organization of American States OAS, Luis Almagro, and other members of the General Assembly, Heads of Delegation, Ambassadors, Foreign Ministers, civil society.

The Coalition of Afrodescendant Communities enthusiastically celebrates the agenda of this 53rd Assembly "Strengthening a Culture of Democratic Accountability with Promotion, Protection and Equality of Human Rights in the Americas".

We wish to begin by celebrating and recognizing the implementation of the Peace Process between the Government of President Gustavo Petro of Colombia and the ELN, towards a Total Peace in Colombia.

Likewise, as a Coalition we state that more than 75 years after the founding of the OAS we have unfulfilled promises, the American Convention on Human Rights as well as the Inter-American Democratic Charter have not achieved its spirit of Representative Democracy, Social Justice, and Peace. And reiterating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights".

Afro-descendant populations and communities today continue to be excluded from the right to exercise full citizenship in the Americas.

Yesterday, June 19, 2023 marked the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of the end of the last vestige of Slavery in the United States. Today African American populations are still excluded and discriminated against due to the persistence of Systemic Racism and Racial Discrimination and all related and contemporary forms of intolerance.

Today we as the Coalition of Afrodescendant Communities attended this Assembly with a reduced participation of our members who in most cases were unable to attend due to lack of resources to cover their travel to the United States and others because the U.S. Consulates in most countries ignored and do not give importance to the resolutions of the Permanent Council of the OAS where it invites members of Civil Society of "Special Character'', which for the U.S. Consuls means nothing, because it is not a member of a Government to have an Official status. The U.S. Mission to the OAS, likewise viewed with disdain and irrelevance that members of the Coalition of Afrodescendant Communities achieved their participation in this scenario of the General Assembly as the governing stage of Democracy in the Americas.

The Afrodescendant population of the Americas is estimated at more than 200 million people, who have limited access to quality education and health services, housing and social security, are victims of Structural Racism, Racial Discrimination and permanent exclusion as a consequence of entrenched inequalities and inherited poverty. For this reason it is of utmost importance that OAS member states promote:

* The Afro-descendant Economic Development Fund of the Americas.
* Create the Permanent Forum of Afro-descendants within the OAS, as an appropriate mechanism for dialogue, validation, consultation and monitoring of the policies of the States, for the advancement of Afro-descendants.
* That the OAS subscribe to the Declaration on the Rights of Afro-descendant Peoples, promoted at the United Nations.
* The proclamation of the II International Decade for People of African Descent and its respective Plan of Action. At the same time, deepen the knowledge of the conditions faced by this population and recognize that Afro-descendants represent a specific human group that requires special attention and public policies that promote their development with ethnic and cultural identity. In this way, the OAS should highlight the significant contribution made by Afro-descendants to our societies in the Americas and, likewise, propose concrete measures to promote their full inclusion in the social, political and economic life of their nations.
* Hold the Regional Conference of the Americas against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and other related forms of intolerance, with Climate Change and the Energy Transition as the main theme.
* Designate and establish a special envoy for the International Decade for People of African Descent.
* That the OAS create a Commission on Reparations for Afro-descendants, to correct the legacy of enslavement of Afro-descendants.
* That the OAS create a commission to follow up and evaluate Convention 169 on Free, Prior and Informed Consultation in Afro-descendant Communities.
* We urge the OAS General Assembly to express its rejection of the attacks of racism, racial discrimination, racial hatred and intolerance that have been committed against the Vice President of Colombia Francia Marquez, the first Afro-Colombian woman to obtain this dignity democratically.

The OAS must reestablish its firm commitment to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance at the national, regional and international levels. The recognition that no country can consider itself exempt from racism, that racism is a global concern and that a universal effort must be undertaken to combat it, is a major achievement. The Durban Declaration and Plan of Action is therefore one of our roadmaps and has a strong moral value and forms the basis for efforts at the regional and global level.

1. This document compiles the written presentations that coincide with what was presented by the Coalitions during the Dialogue of the Heads of Delegation, the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General and the Representatives of Civil Society, Workers, the Private Sector and other Social Actors. Those whose presentation was completely different from what was sent to the Civil Society Relations Section, as part of the requirements for participation, are not included in this document. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2022/03/facts-figures-human-rights-americas-2021-22/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.cepal.org/es/comunicados/cepal-al-menos-4473-mujeres-fueron-victimas- feminicidio-america-latina-caribe-2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)