

CHAPTER I

ACTIVITIES OF THE IACHR IN 2015

1. The first chapter of the annual report is divided into eight sections. The first describes the restructuring of the IACHR Executive Secretariat this year, and reports on the new institutional division by specialized areas. It is especially important to provide this explanation in the first part of Chapter I, for this report refers to activities carried out under the new structure.

2. The second part of the report describes the activities carried out in the three periods of sessions of 2015; the third part describes in detail the onsite visit by the IACHR to Mexico and the official visits carried out in the context of the work of the thematic rapporteurships. The fourth part recounts the activities of the IACHR related to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (I/A Court HR), especially in relation to the referral of contentious cases (12 in 2015), appearances and participation in public and private hearings before the I/A Court HR, the filing of observations on the state reports in cases in which compliance with the judgment is being supervised, and the filing of observations on state reports on the implementation of provisional measures.

3. The fifth section of the first chapter describes the activities of the IACHR in relation to the friendly settlement mechanism, such as working visits, the signing of friendly settlement agreements, monitoring compliance with recommendations, working meetings with states, victims, and petitions, and the reports giving the IACHR's approval of friendly settlement agreements (five during the year covered by this report).

4. The sixth section describes the activities of the IACHR in relation to the political organs of the OAS. This section has been modified in relation to the previous year. Now not only is the activity of the IACHR reported to the General Assembly, but in addition a description is offered of how the IACHR has carried out its function of providing advisory services to the states on human rights through participation in the General Assembly, in the meetings of the Permanent Council, and in the Committee on Migration Issues of the OAS.

5. The seventh part of the first chapter describes the tasks carried out by the Inter-Institutional Relations Section, created with the restructuring. The section details the tasks undertaken to strengthen and give impetus to relations between the IACHR and intergovernmental agencies (both universal and regional), civil society organizations, national human rights institutions, and academia in the region.

6. The eighth and final section of this chapter lists all the activities for human rights promotion, which is a fundamental pillar of the IACHR's mandate. The IACHR has earmarked considerable resources to organizing, participating in, and sponsoring activities aimed at promoting human rights.

A. Reorganization of the Executive Secretariat

7. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of the Organization of American States (OAS) works based on three fundamental principles that are set forth in the instruments that establish the Commission and that elaborate on its mission: (i) the observance, defense, and promotion of human rights, and advising the states in that area; (ii) victims' access to the inter-American human rights system; and (iii) compliance with the decisions of the IACHR. In its 55 years the Commission has been widely recognized for the role it has played in holding dictatorial regimes accountable, promoting democratic transitions, making reparation for victims, and eliminating impunity. The legitimacy of the inter-American human rights system is based on the principle of independence and autonomy, as well as the results attained in promoting and defending human rights. Among the indicators of the impact of the IACHR are the constant increase in the

number of persons who turn to it to file their petitions, the diversity of issues raised and of civil society organizations and other international organizations that attend its hearings, the high level of state and civil society representation in those hearings, the increase in the use of the case-law and standards of the IACHR by many courts in the region, and the increase in the mandates that the General Assembly entrusts to the Commission.

8. In recent years the IACHR has been taking various measures aimed at responding efficiently to the various challenges in the region. At the same time, there has been a pronounced increase in the work of the thematic rapporteurships and in promotion activities. The various demands have been assumed by an Executive Secretariat with limited human and financial resources.

9. The tension between the increase in the workload and the limited resources for tackling it is not new. In early 2000 the IACHR entrusted the Executive Secretariat with adopting measures to overcome this tension and to increase productivity. The Secretariat sought the consistency and coherence of the legal work by establishing working guides and legal guidelines. In addition, specialized management groups were established aimed at making the work more efficient. For example in 2004 the group was established that is dedicated exclusively to supporting litigation before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (I/A Court HR), and in 2007 two specialized groups were started up: the Registry Group, with exclusive responsibility for evaluating petitions affected by the procedural backlog, and the Protection Group, for analyzing requests for precautionary measures. That same year the Press Office was established. Finally, in 2008 the Executive Secretariat was restructured through the division of labor by geographic regions, which was announced by the IACHR in its Annual Report that year.¹

10. As a result of the process of strengthening the IACHR², in 2013 the IACHR reformed its Rules of Procedure, policies, and practices. Given the persistence of the procedural backlog, which itself has a detrimental impact on obtaining justice for victims, and which moreover is a source of permanent tension with the users of the inter-American human rights system, in November 2014 the Commission adopted a plan to overcome it, which included a series of reforms to its policies and practices.

11. In the reorganization an effort was made to harmonize the structure of the Executive Secretariat with the pillars of the mandate of the IACHR: protection (system of petitions and cases), monitoring (countries and thematic), and promotion of human rights (advising states, training, and public policies). In addition, it includes the concentration of the functions of institutional development, inter-institutional relations, and administrative support, which are necessary for ensuring the efficient implementation of the IACHR's mandate.

12. The new organizational structure of the Executive Secretariat is aimed, in general, at making the work of the IACHR more efficient. In particular, it seeks: (i) to increase productivity and reduce the duration of the procedure, and to address the procedural backlog; (ii) to facilitate victims' access to the Commission and to ensure optimal efficiency in its own processes and procedures in the individual petition system; (iii) to foster full compliance with its pronouncements and recommendations; (iv) to maintain permanent monitoring of the human rights situation in the member states of the Organization, with timely actions by the IACHR; and (v) to disseminate and promote the observance of human rights and universal ratification of the relevant regional instruments.

13. To achieve this the IACHR adopted a structure made up of five departments under the leadership of the executive secretary and the assistant executive secretary: (1) Department of Petitions and Cases; (2) Department of Thematic Monitoring; (3) Department of Geographic Monitoring; (4) Department of Promotion and Public Policies; and, (5) Department of Institutional Development and Administrative Support.

¹ See, 2008 Annual Report of the IACHR, Chapter II.D.I. ([http://www.cidh.oas.org/annualrep/2008sp/cap2.sp.htm#Reorganización de la Secretaría Ejecutiva](http://www.cidh.oas.org/annualrep/2008sp/cap2.sp.htm#Reorganización%20de%20la%20Secretaría%20Ejecutiva))

² For more on the strengthening process, see the following link: <http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/mandato/fortalecimiento.asp>

14. Following is a presentation of the structure and general functions of each area:

- **Executive Secretariat**, which provides services to the Commissioners in addition to conducting the strategic management of the IACHR. The following two offices support the Executive Secretary in his or her functions.
 - Office of the Executive Secretariat, which assists the Executive Secretary in the development of his or her functions and in relation to the IACHR and the users of the system.
 - Office of Press and Communication, which is in charge of providing advisory services on strategic communication to the IACHR through the Executive Secretariat, and of its institutional image.
- **Office of the Assistant Executive Secretary**, assists and, as necessary, performs the functions of the Executive Secretary and is in charge of the legal direction of the IACHR Executive Secretariat. The following two offices are under the Office of the Assistant Executive Secretary:
 - Protection Group, in charge of following up on all matters related to the precautionary measures mechanism and standardizing all related procedures; and
 - Office of Documents, entrusted with coordinating the publication of documents of the Commission, including the Annual Report, and the country and thematic reports, etc., in the working languages of the IACHR; as well as providing logistical support during its periods of sessions.
- **Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression**³, whose mandate is to promote the freedom of expression by preparing annual reports, dissemination activities, alerts, the study of rules and practices at odds with international provisions in this area, and support for the preparation of reports on contentious matters and on precautionary measures related to this issue.
- **Department of Petitions and Cases (DPC)** has the aim of assisting the IACHR in its function of receiving, analyzing, and processing individual petitions that allege violations of human rights. The procedure has four stages: initial study, admissibility, merits, and monitoring of compliance with recommendations. The IACHR also assists in the procedures before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. This department is made up of four sections:
 - Registry Section, in charge of receiving and making the initial evaluation of petitions with the aim of establishing whether they meet the requirements demanded by the Rules of Procedure of the IACHR for their processing.
 - Petitions Section, in charge of processing the petitions pending before the IACHR in the admissibility stage.
 - Cases Section, in charge of processing the petitions pending before the IACHR in the merits phase through the Merits Group; as well as the work of the IACHR in the proceedings before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights through the Court Group.
 - Friendly Settlements and Follow-up Section, entrusted with providing technical support to the IACHR for carrying out its mandate to facilitate friendly settlements in the matters pending in the system of petitions and cases, and following up on the recommendations made by the IACHR.
- **The Department of Geographic Monitoring (DMG)** has the purpose of ensuring constant follow-up by the IACHR on the human rights situation in all states of the hemisphere, based on a geographic approach, by subregions and countries.

³ The Office of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression is a permanent office with its own operational structure and functional independence.

- **The Department of Thematic Monitoring (DMT)** has the purpose of assisting the IACHR in its principal function of promoting the observance and defense of human rights by following up the situation in OAS Member States from a thematic perspective, cooperating in the development of jurisprudence and legal standards, and **strengthening** the ability of the IACHR to protect the Rights of persons, groups and collectives that are in a special situation of vulnerability and that have been historically discriminated. The Direction has a section that coordinates the work of the technical teams of eight Rapporteurships and a thematic unit. An important goal of the DTM is that all the thematic monitoring work of the IACHR is performed in an articulated and strategic manner, considering the intersection of identities and risks that could aggravate human Rights violations against the diverse persons, groups and collectives in the Hemisphere. The following is a description by the IACHR of the mandate of each Rapporteurship and Unit that comprises the DTM:
 - Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Created with the purpose of paying special attention to the indigenous peoples of the Americas who are especially exposed to human rights violations, and due to the situation of risk that usually affects them, and also to strengthen, promote and systematize the work of the IACHR in this field. The Rapporteurship promotes the mechanisms provided by the inter-American system of human rights to protect the rights of indigenous peoples; it conducts specialized studies and prepares reports on this matter; carries out visits to countries of the region; and assists the Inter-American Commission in responding to petitions and cases, as well as precautionary measures and the processing of provisional measures.
 - Rapporteurship on the Rights of Women. Created with an initial mandate to assess the extent to which legislation and practice which affect women's rights in OAS Member States complied with general obligations of equality and non-discrimination as recognized by the American Convention and the American Declaration and other inter-American instruments. The Rapporteurship helps to understand more clearly the need for additional measures to guarantee the possibility for women to fully exercise their basic rights, and it issues specific recommendations aimed to strengthen compliance by Member States of their priority obligations relating to equality, non-discrimination, the right to a life free of violence, and access to justice. Likewise, the Rapporteurship promotes the mechanisms provided for by the inter-American system of human rights to protect the rights of women; conducts specialized studies and prepares reports on this matter; and assists the Inter-American Commission in responding to petitions and other reports of human rights violations in the region.
 - Rapporteurship on the Rights of Migrants, Refugees and other Persons in the Context of Human Mobility. The current mandate of the Rapporteurship is focused on the promotion and guarantee of the rights of migrant persons and their families, asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, victims of trafficking in persons, internally displaced persons, as well as other groups of persons in a situation of vulnerability in the context of human mobility. Pursuant to this mandate, the Rapporteurship aims to generate awareness about the obligations of States in this area; to monitor the human Rights situation of groups of persons within its mandate and to publicize the violations of human rights affecting them; to prepare specialized studies and reports on this subject matter; to carry out visits to countries of the region; and to assist the Inter-American Commission in responding to petitions and cases, and to process precautionary and provisional measures.
 - Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child. Created with the mandate of promoting the rights of boys, girls and adolescents within the jurisdiction of Member States of the Organization of American States. The Rapporteurship promotes the mechanisms provided for by the inter-American system of human rights to protect the rights of girls, boys and adolescents; carries out specialized studies and prepares reports on this subject matter; it assists the Inter-American Commission in responding to petitions and cases, as well as precautionary

measures; carries out visits to the countries of the region; and performs several activities of promotion and protection of the human rights of girls, boys and adolescents, such as seminars, specialized meetings and workshops.

- Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty. The mandate of the Rapporteurship is to monitor the situation of all persons subject to any form of detention or prison in Member States; to conduct visits to OAS Member States with a view to gathering information on the matter; and to visit places of detention or of deprivation of liberty. The Rapporteurship promotes the mechanisms provided by the inter-American system to protect the rights of persons deprived of liberty; prepares specialized studies and reports in this field; and assists the Inter-American Commission in the processing of petitions and individual cases alleging violations of human rights of persons deprived of liberty, as well as of precautionary and provisional measures. It also carries out promotional activities and organizes seminars, workshops and expert consultation meetings.
- Rapporteurship on the Rights of Afrodescendants and against Racial Discrimination. Created with the mandate of enhancing, systematizing, strengthening and consolidating the work of the IACHR with respect to the rights of persons of African descent and against racial discrimination. The Rapporteurship promotes the mechanisms provided by the inter-American system of human rights to protect the rights of Afrodescendants; conducts visits to States; carries out specialized studies and prepares reports on this subject matter; and assists the Inter-American Commission in the processing of petitions, cases, precautionary and provisional measures.
- Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders. Its mandate involves addressing the situation of risk of human rights defenders and justice operators, and providing greater visibility to their important role in building a democratic society where the rule of law is in full effect. The Rapporteurship promotes the mechanisms provided by the inter-American system of human rights to protect human rights defenders and justice operators; conducts visits to countries in the region; prepares specialized studies and reports on this subject matter; and assists the Inter-American Commission in responding to petitions and cases, and in the processing of precautionary and provisional measures.
- Rapporteurship on the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Persons (LGBTI). Its mandate is to address issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and corporal diversity. With the creation of this Rapporteurship, the IACHR wanted to show its commitment to strengthening its work toward the protection, promotion and monitoring of the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex persons. The Rapporteurship is responsible for the general monitoring of human rights violations against LGBTI persons in the Americas, and to increase awareness about such violations; it conducts specialized studies and prepares reports on this subject; provides advice to Member States of the OAS and its political organs on such issues; and assists the Inter-American Commission in the processing of individual petitions and cases, as well as requests for precautionary measures to the IACHR and provisional measures before the Inter-American Court that pertain to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
- Unit on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. During its 146^o Sessions held in November 2012, the Inter-American Commission decided to create a Unit on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, taking into account the interdependent and indivisible nature of human rights, as well as the importance to protect and promote economic, social and cultural rights in the region. On April 3, 2014 the IACHR began the process to create a Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which end it opened up a special fund to receive financial resources for its establishment, and invited Member states of the OAS to deposit their contributions.

- **The Department of Promotion and Public Policies (DPPP)** has the aim of supporting the IACHR in the promotion of human rights in the region. This area is made up of three sections:
 - The Advice to States Section, in charge of coordinating advisory services for the states in respect of human rights, strengthening the IACHR's relations with the member states and with observer countries and other countries outside the hemisphere.
 - The Training and Dissemination Section assists the IACHR in its function of promoting dissemination of the inter-American human rights system, its standards and case-law, as well as good practices in relation to human rights in the region.
 - The Public Policy Section is in charge of promoting public policies aimed at strengthening respect for human rights as a central aspect of the processes of strengthening the national capacities for implementing human rights.

- **The Department of Institutional Development and Administrative Affairs (DIAA)** is responsible for the financial and operational plans and reports, human resources management, and administrative logistics of the Commission, staff training, the coordination of all administrative personnel assigned to the regional sections and rapporteurships, as well as management of the strategy for technology and automated tools. It is made up of the following three sections and one unit:
 - The Administrative Management Section directs its efforts to administering the financial resources of the IACHR.
 - The Fundraising and Project Management Section is responsible for designing strategies and coordinating actions aimed at mobilizing the resources needed for properly carrying out the mandates of the IACHR in keeping with the priorities indicated by the Commission.
 - The Inter-Institutional Relations Section, in charge of the IACHR's relations with other regional human rights mechanisms and those of the United Nations, as well as other institutions.
 - The Technology Systems Unit is in charge of administering the IACHR's systems and services for information technologies and telecommunications.

15. In order to adequately implement the restructuring of the Executive Secretariat, the teams prior to the reorganization (the regional sections) handed over the portfolios of cases and petitions to the new sections of the Department of Petitions and Cases. In addition, in the first half of the year meetings were held between the former regional sections and the Geographic Monitoring team in order to transmit information on the human rights situation of each country. In that same period the persons in charge of managing and coordinating the Thematic Monitoring area held meetings with the teams of the thematic rapporteurships in order to receive information on their work plans, progress, and challenges; and on the human and financial resources available.

16. The new structure, which became fully operational as of July 1, 2015, was presented to the member states of the OAS and civil society in meetings held in the context of the 156th period of sessions of the IACHR.

17. As of the production of this Annual Report the Executive Secretariat was giving impetus to the administrative processes required for the structural change to be formalized by an amendment to Executive Order 08-01 regarding the structure of the OAS, which was issued by the Secretary General. Accordingly, on October 29, 2015, the Executive Secretariat presented the Office of the Secretary General a proposal to regulate the structure, and is awaiting his approval.

B. Periods of sessions of the Inter-American Commission held in 2015

18. In the period covered by this report the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) met on four occasions in the city of Washington, D.C.: January 26 to 30, 2015, in the January working meeting; March 13 to 27, in the 154th regular period of sessions; July 20 to 28, in the 155th regular period of sessions; and from October 17 to 28, in the 156th regular period of sessions. In the course of 2015, the Inter-American Commission approved a total of 76 reports on cases and individual petitions: 42 admissibility reports, 2 inadmissibility reports, 5 friendly settlement reports, and 22 reports on the merits. It decided to publish five reports on the merits and it decided to archive 107 petitions and cases. The IACHR also held 110 hearings and 65 working meetings.

	Merits	Friendly Settlement	Admissibility	Inadmissibility	Publication	Archives
Reports approved	22	5	42	2	5	107

1. 154th regular period of sessions

19. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights held its 154th regular period of sessions from March 13 to 27, 2015. During these sessions, the IACHR elected its authorities, and its board of officers was made up of Rose-Marie Belle Antoine as President, James L. Cavallaro as First Vice President, and José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez as Second Vice President. The election was held in keeping with the Commission's Rules of Procedure, the first day of the period of sessions. The other Commissioners are Tracy Robinson, Felipe González, Rosa María Ortiz, and Paulo Vannuchi.

20. During these sessions 55 public hearings were held along with 29 working meetings, 20 of which were on friendly settlements. In addition, 82 parallel meetings were held that allowed for direct interaction between the members of the Commission and the human rights organizations of the region, victims of human rights violations, and representatives of the states.

21. During the 154th period of sessions the IACHR approved the report Access to Information, Violence against Women, and the Administration of Justice. The report offers an initial approach to the challenges that women in the Americas face accessing information controlled by the state regarding violence and discrimination, while also systematizing the standards developed in the inter-American system in this regard, and it identifies good practices in the region with respect to applying and carrying out those standards.

22. The Commission held meetings with different subgroups of states: the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), the Central American Integration System (SICA), and Canada and the United States. The dialogue revolved around five topics: the procedural backlog, the freeze on positions in the Executive Secretariat, the financing of the IACHR, the restructuring of the Executive Secretariat, and the creation of the Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

23. During this period of sessions a meeting was held with then-Secretary General-elect of the OAS Luis Almagro. The Commission also received representatives of the Arab Human Rights Committee of the Arab League and also from the United Nations, including Chaloka Beyani, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; and John Knox, United Nations Independent Expert on human rights and the environment.

24. During the period of sessions the IACHR made a public presentation of the report The Right to Truth in the Americas, the main guests being Helen Mack, President of the Fundación Myrna Mack; Nilda Celia Garré, Permanent Representative of the Mission of Argentina to the OAS; and Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the OAS. The report identifies positive contributions made in almost ten states by victims, family

members, human rights defenders, and civil society organizations geared to documenting, verifying, and disseminating the truth regarding human rights violations, such as non-official truth commissions, conducting investigations, preparing studies and reports, as well as initiatives aimed at pressuring countries to ensure the social and public recognition of those violations.

25. During the public hearings the Commission received information on various situation such as the situation of racial discrimination and justice in the United States, where, according to the civil society organizations, the criminal justice system has a disproportionate impact on African-American and Latino persons; and they indicated that many police forces have practices that are discriminate against racial minorities, such as the use of racial profiling.

26. The IACHR stated its concern with respect to several human rights issues in Puerto Rico, including the detention of migrants and the special situation of vulnerability of Afro-descendent and poor migrant women. It also considered particularly alarming the fact that the United States, the only country that is currently applying the death penalty in the region, imposes this sanction on a population that has abolished it and prohibited it in its domestic law, and expressed its concern about conducting trials in a language that could not be fully understood by the accused.

27. The Commission expressed concern about the situation of the right to form and join trade unions in the Americas, with special emphasis on the United States, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Colombia, and Honduras; and also regarding the reports of threats against and assassinations of trade unionists in the region. The Commission made it clear that it is interested in receiving additional information concerning the priorities in this regard for the future work of the Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, for which, it was noted, labor rights will be a priority.

2. 155th regular period of sessions

28. The Inter-American Commission held its 155th period of sessions July 20-28, 2015. During these sessions, the IACHR did not hold public hearings or working meetings, as it was a period of sessions for internal deliberations.

29. During this period of sessions the IACHR adopted the report Refugees and Migrants in the United States: Families and Unaccompanied Children. The report analyzes the measures adopted by the United States in response to the arrivals of refugees and migrants, in particular families and unaccompanied children coming from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico.

30. In this period of sessions the Commission officially launched the Portal of the Individual Petition System of the IACHR, which constitutes a tool for transmitting information thanks to which the parties will be able to send communications and annexes, view documents put out by the Commission, and consult on the status of their matters. The launch was attended by representatives of civil society, ambassadors from the permanent missions of the OAS, and OAS staff.

31. In the context of this period of sessions the IACHR held a meeting in which Maina Kiai, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, who in addition to submitting a report on his activities engaged in a dialogue on the laws and practices related to the exploitation of natural resources that hinder the exercise of the rights to peaceful assembly and association.

3. 156th regular period of sessions

32. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights held its 156th regular period of sessions October 17-28, 2015. During these sessions 55 public hearings and 36 working meetings were held, as well as meetings with states and civil society organizations of the region. In addition, 72 parallel meetings were held that allowed for direct interaction between the members of the Commission and the human rights organizations of the region.

33. In the context of the sessions meetings were held with the representatives of the states and missions to the OAS. The Commission held meetings with 29 representatives of the states before the OAS⁴. The dialogue mainly addressed two issues: presenting the new structure of the Executive Secretariat of the Commission, and second, following up on the proposal to establish the Special Rapporteurship on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In this respect, it was noted that to date the resources needed to establish it have not been forthcoming.

34. The President of the IACHR, Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, acting on behalf of the IACHR, signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Justice Council of Brazil (CNJ) and the Commission for the purpose of furthering the human rights education and dissemination in the legal culture so as to improve the quality of justice. The President of the Federal Supreme Court of Brazil, Ricardo Lewandowski, signed the memorandum on behalf of the CNJ.

35. The IACHR adopted the Handbook on the Use of the Friendly Settlement Mechanism in the IACHR Petition and Case System, a document that describes the different stages of the friendly settlement process for the purpose of facilitating its accessibility for users of the inter-American human rights system.⁵

36. During the sessions the report Refugees and Migrants in the United States: Families and Unaccompanied Children was presented. The event included remarks by Commissioner Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, President of the IACHR; Commissioner Felipe González, Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants, and country rapporteur for the United States; Commissioner Rosa María Ortiz, Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child; Emilio Álvarez-Icaza L., Executive Secretary of the IACHR; Mary Giovagnoli, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Immigration Policy of the United States Department of Homeland Security; Jennifer Podkul, Senior Program Officer with the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC); and Chiara Cardoletti-Carroll, Deputy Regional Representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Washington. This event was supported by the Central America and Mexico Migration Alliance (CAMMINA).

37. During this period of sessions, two workshops were held geared to users of the inter-American human rights system. One was on the use of the portal of the individual petition system⁶ and the second was on the interactive multimedia system for the presentation of the statistical information of the system of petitions and cases and the system of protection of the IACHR. This tool, which was introduced in mid-2015, systematizes the information contained in the annual reports from 1997 to 2014, and its content will be updated annually. The interactive multimedia system makes it possible to have all the information that the user requests, be it by country, by region, by year, or by a combination of factors.⁷

38. In order to strengthen ties of dialogue and cooperation with the United Nations system, the IACHR held a meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye. Both the rapporteur and the members of the IACHR discussed good practices in relation to freedom of expression as well as the challenges to the full implementation of this right in the region.

⁴ The assistants to the meeting were representatives from the following countries: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panamá, Paraguay, Peru, , Saint Kitts and Nevis , Santa Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad y Tobago, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela.

⁵ The Handbook on The Use of Friendly Settlement Mechanism in the IACHR Petition and Case System, is available at: http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/friendly_settlements/docs/handbook-fs-en.pdf

⁶ The Individual Petition System Portal, was presented during the 155th Period of Sessions, held from July 20th to July 28th of 2015.

⁷ The multimedia section that currently displays statistical data on the activities of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights is available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/multimedia/statistics/statistics.html>

39. After the presentation of the report of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI), the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights renewed the mandate of the GIEI to April 30, 2016, so as to continue taking stock of and investigating the disappearance of 43 students in Iguala, Mexico. This renewal occurred after the GIEI and the Mexican State reached an agreement thanks to which the investigation by the GIEI was incorporated into the investigation of the case by the Office of the Attorney General (PGR: Procuraduría General de la República) for the purpose of following up on the recommendations proposed by the Independent Group.

40. During this period of sessions the IACHR took note of three situations that affect full compliance with the international obligations assumed by the states. The first is that there were states that did not participate in the hearings to which they had been called; the second was the partial participation of some states; and the third the inadequate preparation by some states prior to the hearings.

41. The IACHR identified as problematic the situation of access to water in Latin America, North America, and the Caribbean. According to the information provided by civil society organizations, 20% of the inhabitants of Latin America and the Caribbean do not have access to drinking water through a water supply system. Less than 30% of wastewater receives adequate treatment. As a result, 34 of every 1,000 children in these two regions die every year due to water-related diseases. The representatives of these organizations also emphasized that the situation is aggravated by the growing pressure on natural resources and extractive activities. The main causes of the problems of water scarcity and contamination include the construction of hydroelectric dams and mining. The organizations that requested the hearing indicated that one common element in the region is a legal framework that favors the appropriation and use of water resources for extractive activities to the detriment of human use and consumption.

42. The IACHR expressed its concern with respect to information received on reprisals and threats against persons in some countries of the region for turning to the inter-American human rights system. As these situations have already been reported in these countries, their repetition is alarming. These actions are absolutely unacceptable. The Commission notes that under Article 63 of the IACHR's Rules of Procedure, the states must grant appropriate guarantees to persons who attend a hearing or who provide any sort of information to the Commission during a hearing. The IACHR also notes that this includes not prosecuting or persecuting such persons for statements made to the Commission.

C. Official visits and onsite visits

43. According to Article 15 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure, the IACHR may designate its members as country rapporteurs, ensuring that each OAS member state has a rapporteur. In addition, the Commission may establish thematic rapporteurships. At present, and during the period covered by this report – 2015 – there are eight thematic rapporteurships and one special unit on economic, social and cultural rights.

44. As regards the thematic and country distribution of the rapporteurships, with the present composition of the IACHR the distribution is as follows:

Commissioner	Thematic rapporteurships	Country rapporteurships
Rose - Marie Belle Antoine	Rights of persons of African descent and Rights of indigenous peoples	Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Haiti and Jamaica
James L. Cavallaro	Rights of persons deprived of liberty	Barbados, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago
José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez	Human Rights Defenders	Antigua y Barbuda, Colombia, Costa Rica, Grenada, Panama and St. Kitts and Nevis
Felipe González	Rights of migrants	Brasil, Cuba, Estados Unidos y Venezuela

Commissioner	Thematic rapporteurships	Country rapporteurships
Rosa María Carolina Ortiz	Rights of the child	Belize, Dominica, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, St. Vincent and Grenadines, and St. Lucia
Tracy Robinson	Rights of women and Rights of lesbian, gay, trans, bisexual, and intersex persons	Bahamas, Honduras, Nicaragua and Suriname
Paulo Vannuchi	Unit on economic, social and cultural rights	Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay

45. This section, divided in two, first reports on the onsite visit made by the Inter-American Commission to Mexico, and second describes the official visits made by the members of the Commission in their capacity as thematic or country rapporteurs.

1. Onsite visit to Mexico

46. The IACHR made an onsite visit to Mexico September 28 to October 2, 2015. The objective was to observe the human rights situation in the country on the ground, with special emphasis on forced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and torture; the situation of citizen insecurity, the lack of access to justice; impunity; and the situation of journalists, human rights defenders, and other groups especially hard hit by the context of violence in Mexico.

47. The delegation was made up of the President of the IACHR, Rose-Marie Belle Antoine; the First Vice President, James L. Cavallaro; and Commissioners Tracy Robinson and Rosa María Ortiz. The delegation also included Executive Secretary Emilio Álvarez-Icaza Longoria; Assistant Executive Secretary Elizabeth Abi-Mershed; Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression Edison Lanza; and other members of the IACHR Executive Secretariat.

48. In order to attain the objective of the IACHR's visit, meetings were held with authorities from the three branches of government and the three levels of government (federal, state, and local) and with representatives of autonomous public agencies. The IACHR thanks the government of Mexico for its facilitation of the visit and it values the measures the State has taken to address this situation, such as the 2011 reforms on human rights, which incorporate, among other aspects, constitutional changes that establish that in Mexico all persons shall enjoy the human rights recognized in the Constitution and in the international treaties to which Mexico is a party, as well as the guarantees for their protection. The IACHR acknowledges the decision of the Supreme Court of Justice that restricts military jurisdiction in those cases in which members of the armed forces commit human rights violations against civilians, as well as the power of all of Mexico's courts to supervise compliance with treaty obligations by the other two branches of government.

49. Among the gains made by the Mexican State note is taken of the publication of the new Law on Amparo in April 2013 and the Commission welcomes the National Human Rights Plan (2013-2018), the publication of the General Law on Victims in January 2013, the adoption of the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists in 2012, and the entry into force of the National Program for the Social Prevention of Violence and Crime (2014-2018).

50. Considering the serious situation of persons disappeared in Mexican territory, the IACHR applauds the signing of the Cooperation Agreement for the Creation of a Forensic Commission for the Identification of Remains, signed in 2013 by the Office of the Attorney General and civil society organizations for the purpose of cooperating with the Office of the Attorney General to identify and determine the cause of death of persons whose remains are located in clandestine mass graves in the states of Tamaulipas and Nuevo León. It also acknowledges the Law on the National Registry of Data on Persons Missing or Disappeared since 2012, and the resulting National Registry of Data on Disappeared Persons, as an initial step in pulling together information on disappeared persons. In the area of legislation, the IACHR expresses its hope that bills on forced disappearance and torture at the federal level will be in line with international human rights standards and that the contributions of both the victims and civil society will be included.

51. The Commission welcomes the announcement of the creation, during the first half of 2016, of the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Crimes Committed against Migrants, and it recognizes the efforts made to implement the new criminal justice system, which should become operative in June 2016.

52. Despite the gains the IACHR was able to verify the distance between the legal framework in place and its effective enforcement. This was verified in the course of the visits by the IACHR to Mexico City, Coahuila, Guerrero, Nuevo León, Tabasco, and Veracruz, where it met with civil society organizations, human rights activists, and victims of human rights violations. Information was collected at these meetings regarding some aspects of the human rights situation in Mexico.

53. The Commission also met with representatives of international organizations, with whom it discussed the alarming human rights situation. On concluding the visit, the IACHR issued some preliminary observations verifying that it had taken note of the serious human rights crisis in Mexico, which is characterized by an extreme situation of insecurity and violence; serious violations, especially forced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and torture; critical levels of impunity; and inadequate and insufficient attention to victims and their family members. The effect of the violence and violations of fundamental rights is especially serious and disproportionate among persons living in poverty; migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, and internally displaced persons; women; children and adolescents; human rights defenders; journalists; indigenous peoples, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex (LGBTI) persons, among others. Violence against family members of victims, human rights defenders, and journalists is used to silence reports of violations and the cry for truth and justice, and to perpetuate impunity for serious human rights violations.

54. On concluding the onsite visit on October 2, 2015, the IACHR held a press conference attended by representatives of Mexican and international media. The preliminary observations of the visit were shared at that time; they are contained in the annex to press release No. 112/15⁸.

2. Official visits

a. Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child

Visit to Washington D.C., United States: Adolescents prosecuted in the adult criminal justice system

55. Commissioner Ortiz made a visit to Washington, D.C., United States, from February 3 to 5, 2015. The objective of the visit was to receive information and to observe the situation of adolescents treated as adults in the criminal justice system of the District of Columbia, and on the conditions of adolescents who are being held at detention centers for adults. The visit was one of a series of visits to various states of the United States with the objective of preparing a thematic report on the subject. During the visit the delegation met with authorities of the District of Columbia, civil society organizations, as well as youths who have previously been imprisoned in the penal system for adults; it also visited a detention center for adolescents, where it met with staff and incarcerated youths.

Visit to Brazil: Promoting the rights of children and adolescents⁹

56. Commissioner Rosa María Ortiz visited Brasília and São Paulo with the objective of promoting the rights of children and adolescents in Brazil and to express concern about the proposed constitutional reform to lower the age at which one can be criminally indicted for serious crimes from 18 to

⁸ IACHR, Press Release No. 112/15, "IACHR Wraps up onsite visit to Mexico", available at http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2015/112.asp

⁹ IACHR, Press Release No. 078/2015. "Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child Wraps Up Visit to Brazil and Peaks Out against the Lowering of the Age of Criminal Responsibility", available at http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2015/078.asp

16 years. During that visit, which was carried out from June 1 to 3, emphasis was placed on the need to strengthen measures of prevention as well as the objective of rehabilitation and social reinsertion of the juvenile justice system, which implies increasing and strengthening community-based socio-educational measures that do not entail deprivation of liberty. During her visit, Commissioner Ortiz was received by legislators of both houses of Congress and met with civil society organizations, religious leaders, and adolescents, including some who were deprived of liberty. She also participated in a public hearing before the Legislative Assembly of the state of São Paulo, called by the chairman of the Committee on Human Rights of that assembly, and by the organization World Vision.

Visit to Argentina: Adolescents in conflict with the criminal law

57. The minister of justice of the province of Santa Fe, Republic of Argentina invited Commissioner Ortiz to hold working meetings with officials of the provincial government of Santa Fe and the undersecretary for criminal justice matters of the Ministry of Justice, in the city of Rosario, with the objective of analyzing international standards on adolescents in conflict with the criminal law and restorative justice. Rapporteur Rosa María Ortiz also held meetings with the governor of the province and with the mayor of the city of Rosario.

Visit to Brazil: analysis of the functioning of the National Child Protection System and to gather information for the drafting of a regional report on the matter

58. The Commissioner and Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child, Rosa María Ortiz, along with an attorney from the Executive Secretariat paid a visit to Brazil from 16th to 20th of November in order to analyze the functioning of the National Child Protection System the local, state and federal level. The information gathered during this visit will be used in the process of drafting a regional report on this subject visit. The visit took place in Brasilia and Rio de Janeiro where the Commissioner met with government officials, visited programs and services at locally, and met with civil society and with children and adolescents. The visit was made possible through the support provided by organization World Vision as part of a cooperation agreement to strengthen the National Child Protection Systems.

Visit to Bolivia: analysis of the functioning of the National Child Protection System and to gather information for the drafting of a regional report on the matter

59. The Commissioner and Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child, Rosa María Ortiz, and a lawyer from the Executive Secretariat conducted a visit to Bolivia from November 30th to December 4th. The visit took place in the cities of La Paz and Cochabamba and in the municipalities of Viacha and Sacaba. During the visit, the Rapporteur met with officials of the State, departmental and local levels, and visited schools and services for children located in urban and rural contexts. The Rapporteur also held meetings with civil society organizations and had the opportunity to talk with children and adolescents. The visit was made possible through the support provided by the organization World Vision as part of a cooperation agreement to strengthen the National Child Protection Systems in the region.

b. Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty

Visit to Panama: Prisons

60. Commissioner James Cavallaro visited Panama from June 17 to 19, 2015. There he visited prisons and met with the competent national authorities, with prison wardens and staff, and with civil society representatives.

Visit to Mexico: Federal and state prisons¹⁰

61. Commissioner Cavallaro visited federal and state prisons in Mexico to monitor the human rights situation of persons deprived of liberty. During the visit, which was carried out from October 22 to 24, four prisons were visited: Federal Center for Social Re-adaptation Number 1 “El Altiplano” (CEFERESO No. 1, Centro Federal de Readaptación Social Número 1), as well as the “Santa Martha” Women’s Center for Social Re-adaptation (Centro Femenil de Readaptación Social Santa Martha), the Pretrial Prison for Men (East) (Reclusorio Preventivo Varonil Oriente), and the Center for Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions for Men (East) (Centro de Ejecución de Sanciones Penales Varonil Oriente).

62. According to the information obtained during the visit, federal inmates have better physical conditions and more control, but also an ambience of extreme repression. The Inter-American Commission found that both in federal prisons and in state prisons one finds common structural problems such as overcrowding, corruption, inadequate medical care, lack of privacy, lack of real opportunities for social reinsertion, abuse by the prison staff in charge of guarding the persons deprived of liberty, and the inability of prisoners to file complaints with an independent organ that meets recognized standards of independence and impartiality. The IACHR was able to verify the excessive use of pretrial detention and the failure to apply substitute measures. During the visit testimony was received from numerous persons whose cases had exceeded by far the constitutional time limit of two years for the application of pretrial detention. The Rapporteurship also observed that the persons tried and convicted share the same cells and are in the same common areas.

c. Rapporteurship on Migrants

Visit to Colombia: Colombia-Venezuela border ¹¹

63. From September 10 to 12, Commissioner Felipe González, together with Commissioner Jesús Orozco in his capacity as rapporteur for Colombia, visited the Colombia-Venezuela border with the objective of monitoring the human rights situation of migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers of Colombian nationality who were deported or who returned to Colombia after the shutdown of the main border crossing between San Antonio, state of Táchira, Venezuela, and Cúcuta, department of Norte de Santander, Colombia, on August 19, 2015, and the declaration of a state of emergency (estado de excepción) by Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro on August 21, 2015.

d. Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination

Visit to Colombia: Situation of the human rights of Afro-Colombians¹²

64. Commissioner Rose-Marie Belle Antoine visited the cities of Cali and Bogotá with the aim of receiving information on the human rights situation of Afro-Colombians.¹³ During the visit, from August 10 to 12, meetings were held with several authorities and with representatives of civil society who work on matters related to Afro-descendant persons. Commissioner Rose-Marie Belle Antoine participated in an academic event that took place at the Universidad ICESI of Cali, where she gave a lecture on the rights of persons of African descent in the inter-American human rights system.

¹⁰ IACHR, Press Release No. 116/2015. “ Rapporteur on the Rights on the Rights of Persons Deprived of Liberty Conducted Visit to Mexico”, available at http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2015/116.asp

¹¹ IACHR, Press Release No. 101/2015. “IACHR Conducts Visit to Colombia –Venezuela Border”, available at http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2015/101.asp

¹² IACHR, Press Release No. 095/2015. “ IACHR Visits Colombia to Receive Information on the Situation of Persons of African Descent”, available at http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2015/095.asp

¹³ IACHR, Press Release No. 095/2015. “ IACHR Visits Colombia to Receive Information on the Situation of Persons of African Descent”, available at http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2015/095.asp

65. Visit to Ferguson, St. Louis, New Orleans, Sanford, Orlando, and Miami, United States: Disproportionate use of force by the police directed at African-Americans (see press release No. 118).

66. In order to study racial discrimination and poverty, Commissioner Antoine made a working visit, from September 21 to 25, to several cities of the United States: Ferguson, St. Louis, New Orleans, Sanford, Orlando, and Miami. During this visit the Commissioner held meetings with civil society organizations, activists, students, members of the academic sector, and victims of incidents of police violence and their family members.

e. Unit on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Visit to Paraguay: Human rights and poverty¹⁴

67. Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi headed the delegation that visited Paraguay from May 19 to 22. The visit had two objectives: the first was to compile information to be included in the report on human rights and poverty,¹⁵ and the second was to observe the general human rights situation in the country.

Visit to Bolivia: Human rights and poverty¹⁶

68. In order to collect information for the thematic report on human rights and poverty that the IACHR is preparing, Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi made a working visit from November 29 to December 3, 2014, to the departments of La Paz and Chuquisaca, where he met with authorities of the State and with civil society organizations, and obtained direct information from persons living in poverty. In the department of Chuquisaca the delegation went to Tarabuco and visited the community of Sojta Pata and also the precarious settlement in the Barrio Señor de Maica of the Azari association of communities of District 5.

D. Activities of the IACHR in relation to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

69. In 2015, the Commission continued exercising its mandates under the relevant treaties and under the Rules of Procedure vis-à-vis the Inter-American Court. Following is a detailed breakdown of the activity of the Commission before the Court in the following order: (i) referral of contentious cases; (ii) appearance and participation in public and private hearings; (iii) filing of written observations on the states' reports in cases involving supervision of compliance with the judgment; and (iv) the filing of written observations on states' reports on the implementation of provisional measures.

1. Referral of contentious cases

70. Pursuant to Article 51 of the American Convention and Article 45 of its Rules of Procedure, in 2015 the Commission submitted 12 cases to the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court.

a. Case of Lupe Andrade v. Bolivia (referred on January 8, 2015)

71. The case is related to the international responsibility of the State for the violations of the American Convention on Human Rights in the context of three of the six criminal proceedings against María Nina Lupe del Rosario Andrade Salmón for alleged mismanagement of public economic resources during the

¹⁴ IACHR, Press Release No.066/2015, "IACHR Wraps Up Visit to Paraguay", available at http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2015/066.asp

¹⁵ The report on Poverty and Human Rights in the Americas is being financed by the European Union through a grant contract.

¹⁶ IACHR, Press Release No.148/2015, "IACHR Wraps Up Visit to Bolivia", available at http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2015/148.asp

time she held the positions of council member, chairperson of the Municipal Council, and mayor of La Paz, and specifically for her illegal and arbitrary detention in the context of two trials. The Commission considered that Ms. Andrade's right to a simple and effective remedy was violated when she sought to challenge one of the measures ordering her pretrial detention, while the writ of habeas corpus filed was executed five months after being ruled on, and after an extremely complex process. In addition, the IACHR analyzed the rulings that set the bond and considered that the judicial authorities had not stated the specific reasons for setting the amounts stated, nor did they take into account Ms. Andrade's economic situation. It was concluded that the State violated the right to personal liberty in relation to the right to private property.

72. In addition, the Commission considered that the order imposed on Ms. Andrade by which she has been enjoined from leaving the country for more than 10 years did not meet inter-American standards on restrictions on the exercise of rights. Accordingly, that situation is considered to have impaired her right to personal liberty in relation to her right to freedom of movement. Finally, the Commission considered that the duration of three criminal proceedings was not reasonable due to the deficient action of the judicial authorities on not performing procedural acts that were significant for determining Ms. Andrade's legal situation.

b. Case of Luis Williams Pollo Rivera v. Peru (referred on February 8, 2015)

73. The case is related to a series of violations of human rights to the detriment of Luis Williams Pollo Rivera since his initial detention on November 4, 1992, and for all the time he was under the custody of the State in the context of proceedings brought against him for the crime of terrorism. Accordingly, the Commission concluded that the initial detention was illegal and arbitrary, in breach of the obligation to provide a detailed account of the reasons for the detention, and without judicial oversight. Given that these events took place in the context of a search, the Commission considered that an illegal entry to the domicile had been perpetrated. The Commission also concluded that the pretrial detentions ordered were also arbitrary for they were not based on procedural ends. In addition, the Commission considered that given the applicable legal framework Mr. Pollo Rivera was impeded from filing a writ of habeas corpus.

74. Moreover, the Commission characterized the aggressive acts suffered at the moment of the detention and at the DINCOTE facilities as acts of torture. The Commission considered that the extreme conditions of detention violated his right to humane treatment. All of these acts remain in impunity. The Commission also considered that the criminal proceeding for treason and the two proceedings for the crime of terrorism violated multiple due process guarantees, including the right to be judged by a competent, independent, and impartial court, the right to defense, the right to the presumption of innocence, and the right according to which criminal proceedings shall be public. In addition, the Commission concluded that the State violated the principle of legality on having prosecuted and convicted Mr. Pollo Rivera for having provided medical assistance. The Commission also concluded that the State violated the right to be heard in a reasonable time in the context of a request for a humanitarian pardon made by Mr. Pollo Rivera.

c. Case of Luis Jorge Valencia Hinojosa v. Ecuador (referred February 19, 2015)

75. The case is related to the violent death of police agent Luis Jorge Valencia Hinojosa in the context of a police operation in which the victim was being pursued. The Commission concluded that the criminal investigation breached the State's obligations in respect of clarifying the facts and ensuring justice be done in situations such as in the instant case. Accordingly, the Commission concluded that the use of the police criminal justice system constituted a violation of the right to an independent and impartial judge. The Commission also concluded that the investigation was not conducted with due diligence, despite the indicia that pointed to the responsibility of the police agents who carried out the operation. In particular, the Commission took into account that the State did not make the necessary efforts to clarify whether it was a suicide, as the officers involved alleged, or an extrajudicial execution, as suggested by other indicia. The Commission concluded that the investigation was not carried out in a reasonable time.

76. Starting from the incompatibility of the investigation with the American Convention and the consequent lack of a state response to explain satisfactorily what happened in the context of a police operation, the Commission determined that the death of Mr. Luis Jorge Valencia Hinojosa was attributable to the State. First, the Commission determined that due to the lack of regulation, planning, and control there was an ambience propitious for making undue and excessive use of force by the police agents involved in the operation. Second, the Commission considered it sufficiently shown that the police agents, on not having a normative framework on the use of force in police operations, used deadly force unnecessarily and disproportionately throughout the different moments of the operation.

d. Case of Workers of the Fazenda Brasil Verde v. Brazil (referred March 6, 2015)

77. The facts of the case unfolded in a context in which tens of thousands of workers were subjected year after year to slave labor, which has its roots in discrimination and historical exclusion. In that regard, the group affected is made up primarily of males ages 15 to 40 years, Afro-descendants and morenos originally from the poorest states in the country, and with the worst prospects for work, who, searching for work, go to other states where they are subjected to slave labor. The situation of extreme and special vulnerability of that group is due, among other factors, to the lack of adequate and effective remedies for more than merely formal protection of their rights; the extreme poverty that affects a large part of the population of the states from which they are from; the insufficient presence of state institutions; and the inequitable distribution of the land.

78. In February 1989, March 1993, November 1996, April and November 1997, and March 2000 visits or inspections were made by state authorities to the Fazenda Brasil Verde to verify the workers' conditions. The inspections of April 1997 and March 2000 concluded that there was slave labor; the police visit of 1989 and the inspections of 1993 and 1996 found labor "irregularities"; and the November 1997 inspection considered that there were "some failings" on the hacienda. The workers who succeeded in fleeing stated that the workers were threatened with death if they were to leave the hacienda; that they are impeded from leaving freely; that there is no salary or wage or a miserly wage; that workers become indebted to the owner; that there is a lack of dignified housing, food, and health, among other conditions. The Commission considered that the information available makes it possible to characterize the practices on the hacienda as forced labor and debt servitude, which are considered to constitute contemporary forms of slavery.

e. Case of I.V. v. Bolivia (referred April 23, 2015)

79. The case is related to the international responsibility of the State because of the surgery that was performed on Ms. I.V. in a public hospital on July 1, 2000. This surgery, entailing a bilateral tubal ligation, was performed without it being an emergency situation and without the informed consent of Ms. I.V., who suffered the permanent and forced loss of her reproductive function. The Commission concluded that the surgery performed constituted a violation of Ms. I.V.'s physical and psychological integrity, and of her rights to live free from violence and discrimination, to access to information, and to private and family life, understanding reproductive autonomy as part of those rights. The Commission also concluded that the State did not afford the victim an effective judicial response to those violations.

f. Case of Johan Alexis Ortiz Hernández v. Venezuela (referred May 13, 2015)

80. The case is related to the international responsibility of the State of Venezuela for the death of the youth Johan Alexis Ortiz on February 15, 1998, at the facilities of the Rural Commandos of Caño Negro. Youth Johan Alexis Ortiz was a student at the Cordero School for Training of Members of the National Guard (ESGUARNAC: Escuela de Formación de Guardias Nacionales de Cordero) and died as a result of shots from firearm, in the context of a training exercise ("práctica de foguero") done using live ammunition inside the military facility as a requirement for completing one's training as a member of that institution.

81. The Commission reiterated and applied the framework for analysis of the use of lethal force and, consequently, the standard regarding the high level of scrutiny of any situation in which it is alleged that

there has been an arbitrary deprivation of the life of a person as a result of said use of force. In that sense, the Commission established that the military authorities themselves created the risk on failing to carry out their own regulation of the practice, in relation to the plan for operations and emergencies, as well as the use of arms and munitions. In addition, the Commission established that the State did not provide a satisfactory explanation of the use of live fire and the failure to adopt safety measures.

82. The Commission also concluded that the State did not respond adequately nor in a timely manner to the lesions suffered by Johan Alexis Ortiz, on not having specialized medical personnel or an ambulance that would have made it possible for him to receive care while he was transferred to a medical center, which was especially serious bearing in mind the remote location where the practice session was being conducted.

g. Case of Cosme Rosa Genoveva, Evandro de Oliveira, et al. (Favela Nova Brasília) v. Brazil (referred May 19, 2015)

83. The case is related to the extrajudicial executions of 26 personas – including six children – in the context of the police raids carried out by the Civilian Police of Rio de Janeiro on October 18, 1994 and May 8, 1995 in the shantytown known as Favela Nova Brasília. These deaths were justified by the police authorities by drawing up “reports on resisting arrest” (“auto de resistência”). In addition, in the context of the October 18, 1994 raid C.S.S. (15 years of age), L.R.J. (19 years of age), and J.F.C. (16 years of age) were victims of torture and acts of sexual violence by police agents. The Commission established that these events occurred in a context and pattern of excessive use of force and extrajudicial executions by the police in Brazil, especially in Rio de Janeiro. Moreover, the Commission found that the context in which the events of the case occurred has been tolerated and even sponsored by state institutions. The Commission also established that this context includes the lack of mechanisms of accountability and the situation of impunity that persists in respect of these violations.

84. In addition, the investigations were carried out with the objective of stigmatizing and re-victimizing the deceased persons, for they focused on their guilt and not on verifying the lawfulness of the use of force. Both the death of the 26 persons and the acts of torture and sexual violence are in impunity, and the in Brazil the limitations period has run in relation to any criminal action with respect to most of the facts of the case – the acts of torture and sexual violence in the 1994 raid and the deaths in the 1995 raid.

h. Case of Jorge Vásquez Durand and family v. Ecuador (referred July 8, 2015)

85. The case is related to the forced disappearance of Mr. Jorge Vásquez Durand, a merchant of Peruvian nationality, in the context of the conflict of the Alto Cenepa between Ecuador and Peru. In this context there were several detentions of Peruvian citizens in Ecuador by Ecuadorian security forces. After travelling to Ecuador from Peru, on January 30, 1995 Mr. Vásquez Durand communicated for the last time with his wife, María Esther Gomero de Vásquez, expressing his concern about getting his merchandise through the customs post at the locality of Huaquillas. There is testimony indicating that he was detained the same day at said locality by members of the Ecuadorian intelligence service.

86. The information available indicates that Mr. Vásquez Durand was seen in mid-June 1995 at the Teniente Ortiz Military Barracks in poor condition. This was the last news of the victim. The police and military authorities repeatedly denied that Mr. Vásquez Durand was in the custody of the state. The Truth Commission characterized what happened to Mr. Vásquez Durand as a forced disappearance. The State of Ecuador has not adopted effective measures to determine the whereabouts of Mr. Vásquez Durand, even though it learned of his detention and disappearance through several media outlets. The writ of habeas corpus was not a suitable or effective remedy to that end. More than 20 years after the beginning of his disappearance, no criminal investigation has been opened. The Commission determined that there is a context of impunity for human rights violations committed in the context of the conflict between Ecuador and Peru, this case being an example of that context.

i. Case of Mayra Angelina Gutiérrez Hernández and family v. Guatemala (referred July 15, 2015)

87. The case is related to the disappearance of Mayra Angelina Gutiérrez Hernández as of April 7, 2000, and the lack of a serious, diligent, and timely investigation into what happened. The Commission determined that while it did not have sufficient information to characterize what happened to the victim as a forced disappearance, the State of Guatemala is responsible internationally for breaching the duty to protect the life and integrity of the victim from the moment it learned of her disappearance. The Commission determined that as of that moment the situation of extreme risk affecting the victim should have been clear to the authorities. Despite that, during the first 48 hours after the disappearance was reported the State did not adopt any measure to search for her, and in subsequent weeks the investigative measures taken were minimal and not related to the facts and indicia that were known from the moment of the report.

88. The Commission also declared the international responsibility of the State of Guatemala for the way in which the investigations were conducted. Specifically, the Commission determined that Guatemala breached the guarantee of a reasonable time and lacked due diligence from the beginning of and throughout the investigations. In addition, it established the omission in designing and exhaustively investigating the logical lines of investigation, including those related to the activities of Ms. Gutiérrez in relation to irregular adoptions in Guatemala, as well as many aspects associated with the armed conflict. The Commission also concluded that the investigation was not conducted with a gender perspective and that it included the presence of discriminatory stereotypes regarding the role and social conduct of women.

j. Case of María Luisa Acosta et al. v. Nicaragua (referred July 29, 2015)

89. The case is related to the lack of a diligent investigation, in a reasonable time, into the assassination of Mr. Francisco García Valle, the husband of human rights defender María Luisa Acosta, on April 8, 2002 in Nicaragua. The case is also related to the due process violations and criminalization suffered by Ms. Acosta in the context of the proceedings that were subsequently opened. The Commission determined that the State did not diligently investigate the motive of the assassination. Specifically, it established that from the context, from the antecedents of her work, and from the information in the domestic record, the hypothesis clearly emerged according to which the assassination of Mr. García Valle may have been due to the intense activity by Ms. María Luisa Acosta in defense of the rights of indigenous peoples.

90. The Commission determined that even though from the outset of the investigation there were indicia pointing to two persons whose interests were directed affected by the work of María Luisa Acosta as the masterminds of the assassination, this line of investigation was not assumed seriously and exhaustively, but to the contrary a dismissal was issued, in violation of the legal requirements, hastily, and without having taken essential evidence. Subsequently, notwithstanding the appearance of supervening evidence that supported the hypothesis regarding the masterminds, the domestic authorities refused to re-open the investigations. The Commission considered that these acts and omissions, together with other indicia, were sufficient to consider that there may have been a deliberate cover-up. The Commission also considered that the rejection of the appeal filed by Ms. Acosta, since she did not provide the paper for issuing the respective copies, was an unreasonable formality and a barrier to access to justice. In its report the IACHR also found that the State violated the duty of due diligence in relation to the search for, identification, and punishment of a direct perpetrator of the assassination of Mr. García Valle. Finally, the Commission determined that the duration of the investigation and criminal proceeding did not satisfy the guarantee of a reasonable time.

k. Case of Dismissed Workers of Petroperú, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy and Finance, and Empresa Nacional de Puertos v. Peru (referred August 13, 2015)

91. The case is related to the violation of the rights to judicial guarantees and judicial protection to the detriment of 84 workers of Petroperú, 39 workers of the Ministry of Education, 15 workers of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and 25 workers of the National Port Authority (Empresa Nacional de

Puertos), as the result of the lack of an adequate and effective judicial response to their collective dismissals in the context of the streamlining processes carried out by the public agencies where they worked in the 1990s. The facts in this matter share the essential characteristics of the case heard by the Inter-American Court Dismissed Congressional Employees v. Peru. The IACHR found the Peruvian State responsible, for the workers were victims of the ineffectiveness, lack of legal certainty, and lack of independence and impartiality that characterized the judiciary at the time of the facts. These characteristics were reflected in the defenselessness of the victims after turning to the judiciary to obtain protection in the face of their respective dismissals.

I. Case of Nelson Carvajal Carvajal v. Colombia (referred October 22, 2015)

92. This case is related to the assassination of journalist Nelson Carvajal Carvajal for reasons related to the exercise of his profession, the lack of a serious, diligent, and timely investigation into what happened, in a context of serious threats and harassment of the journalist's family members that led them to leave Colombia. In its report on the merits the Commission determined that there were sufficient and consistent evidence – in particular that which was in the hands of the very state organs entrusted with the investigation and criminal prosecution – to conclude that the assassination of Nelson Carvajal Carvajal was committed to silence his work as a journalist revealing illegal acts committed with the protection of the local authorities, and that several indicia on the participation of state agents in these facts, which were not investigated with due diligence. The lack of due diligence in the investigation was manifest in the failure to take the necessary measures of protection in the face of the threats against family members of Nelson Carvajal and witnesses who came forward during the investigations, the lack of adequate procedures for collecting evidence, the unwarranted delay and lack of substantial progress in the investigations, as well as the ineffectiveness of the criminal proceeding to determine all those responsible.

93. The Commission considered that the repeated threats and harassment directed against witnesses and family members of the victim, together with the lack of measures of protection and guarantees of an independent investigation, had a chilling and intimidating effect so that the family members of Nelson Carvajal would desist from participating in the proceeding as third-party accusers, and they constituted obstructions in the investigations and in the subsequent criminal proceedings. In this respect, the Commission determined that these facts had a detrimental impact on the psychological and moral integrity of the family members, who more than 16 years after the facts have not been able to learn the truth about what happened and have not found justice. Finally, the IACHR considered that the departure from Colombia of the family members of Nelson Carvajal Carvajal was the result of the threats, the lack of state protection, and the impunity that has characterized this case, which are imputable to the State.

m. Case 12.585 Ángel Pacheco León and family vs. Honduras (submitted on November 13, 2015)

94. The case has to do with the killing of Ángel Pacheco León on November 23, 2001, in the context of his campaign as the National Party candidate for a seat in the National Congress. The case also involves the situation of impunity surrounding his murder. Specifically, the Commission found that the Honduran State failed to comply with its duty to investigate with due diligence, as serious irregularities were committed in the early stages of the investigation; logical and timely lines of inquiry were not pursued, including evidence pointing to the participation of State agents; and there were other obstacles such as reprisals and pressures that were not properly investigated. The Commission also found that the State failed to comply with its obligation to investigate within a reasonable time. As for the attribution of responsibility to the State for the death of Ángel Pacheco León, the Commission noted that there were multiple indications of participation by State agents, which, as mentioned previously, were not properly investigated and were therefore not disproved by the State. In this regard, the Commission considered that the State may not rely on the failure to comply with its duty to investigate and that in this case, the aforementioned evidence makes it possible to determine that the Honduran State is responsible for what happened to the victim. As a result, the IACHR concluded that Ángel Pacheco León's right to life and political rights were violated, as were his family's rights to personal integrity, a fair trial, and judicial protection.

n. Case 12.795 Alfredo Lagos del Campo vs. Peru (submitted on November 28, 2015)

95. The case has to do with the dismissal of Alfredo Lagos del Campo on June 26, 1989, as a result of certain statements he made as president of the Electoral Committee of the Industrial Community of the Ceper-Pirelli company. The Industrial Community was an association of workers designed to encourage employee participation in the ownership and management of the company. Statements made by Alfredo Lagos del Campo denounced acts of improper interference by the employers in the workers' organizations at the company and in the internal elections of the Industrial Community. The dismissal was later upheld by Peruvian domestic courts.

96. The Commission determined that the dismissal of Alfredo Lagos del Campo constituted an arbitrary interference into the exercise of the right to freedom of expression, as it failed to meet the requirements established in Article 13.2 of the American Convention with respect to subsequent imposition of liability. As to the strict legality requirement, the Commission found that the terms of the law on which the dismissal was based are vague and imprecise, particularly because they do not define the scope of application for purposes of protecting speech about matters of public interest or the speech of workers' representatives acting in their capacity as such. The IACHR also concluded that the penalty imposed was not proved to be truly necessary in a democratic society to protect the stated objectives, as Alfredo Lagos del Campo's statements were of clear public interest. Although some of his statements could potentially affect the company's reputation, they constituted permissible criticism in the context in which they were made. The Commission also determined that there were other, less harmful measures that the company could have used to defend the honor of those who felt they were adversely affected. Finally, the Commission determined that the most severe punishment provided for by law was applied, with noticeable effects on the right to freedom of expression of the victim as a leader of workers and on the right of all workers to access information on matters that concern them.

2. Appearing at and participating in public and private hearings

97. From January 26 to February 6, 2015, the Commission participated in the hearings that were held in the 107th regular session of the Court, held in San José, Costa Rica. During that session five public hearings were held in the cases: Peasant Community of Santa Bárbara (Peru); Galindo Cárdenas (Peru); López Lone et al. (Honduras); Kaliña and Lokono Indigenous Peoples (Suriname); and García Ibarra (Ecuador). In addition, a public hearing was held on provisional measures for Matter of Certain Venezuelan Prisons (Venezuela). The hearing on Honduras included the participation, as delegates, of Commissioner José de Jesús Orozco and Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression Edison Lanza. The hearings on Ecuador, Suriname, and Venezuela included the participation, as delegate, of Commissioner James Cavallaro. Finally, four private hearings were held to supervise compliance with the judgment in the cases of Pueblo Bello (Colombia); Vélez Loor (Panama); Furlan (Argentina); and Barrios Family (Venezuela).

98. In addition from April 20 to 24, 2015, the IACHR participated in the hearing at the 52nd special session of the Court, held in Cartagena, Colombia. During that session four public hearings were held in the cases: TGGL and family (Ecuador); Velásquez Páiz et al. (Guatemala); Omar Humberto Maldonado et al. (Chile); and Ruano Torres and family (El Salvador). This session included the participation of President Rose-Marie Belle Antoine and First Vice President James Cavallaro.

99. From June 18 to July 1, 2015 the IACHR participated in the hearings held in the 109th regular session of the Court, held in San José, Costa Rica. At that session two public hearings were held, in the cases María Inés Chinchilla (Guatemala) and Yarce et al. (Colombia). In addition, a public hearing was held on Advisory Opinion No. 22, requested by the State of Panama. Commissioners José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez and James Cavallaro participated for the Commission during this session.

100. From August 24 to 29, 2015, the IACHR participated in the hearings held in the 53rd special session of the Court, held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. In that session two public hearings were held, in the

cases of Valdemir Quispialaya Vilcapoma (Peru) and Angel Alberto Duque (Colombia). In addition, a private hearing was held for supervising compliance with the judgment in six Honduran cases. Commissioners Tracy Robinson and James Cavallaro participated in this session.

101. From August 31 to September 4, 2015, the IACHR participated in the 110th regular session of the Court, held in San José, Costa Rica. In that session two private hearings were held for supervision of compliance with the judgment in the cases of Artavia Murillo et al. (Costa Rica); and Boyce et al. and Dacosta Cadogan (Barbados).

102. Finally, from September 28 to October 9, 2015, the Inter-American Court held its 111th regular session in San José, Costa Rica. During that session one public hearing was held on the provisional measures related to the Curado prison (Brazil).

3. Submission of written observations on the states' reports in cases involving supervision of compliance with the judgment

103. Pursuant to the mandate established in Article 57 of the American Convention, as well as Article 69 of the Court's Rules of Procedure, in exercising its role of defense of the inter-American public order, in 2015 the Commission continued providing information and submitting briefs with observations on the states' reports on compliance with judgments. In carrying out this function, the Commission filed 143 briefs with observations, which were submitted to the Inter-American Court.

4. Submission of written observations on the state reports regarding implementation of provisional measures

104. Pursuant to the mandate established at Article 63(2) of the American Convention, as well as what is established at Article 27(7) of the Court's Rules of Procedure, in 2015, in the exercise of its role of defense of the inter-American public order, the Commission continued presenting information and formulating briefs with observations on the state reports on the implementation of the provisional measures in force. In the discharging this function, the Commission presented 53 briefs with observations to the Inter-American Court.

E. Activities of the IACHR in relation to the friendly settlement mechanism

105. In the framework of the system of individual petitions and cases, the friendly settlement procedure of the IACHR is a mechanism used for the peaceful and consensus-based settlement of disputes. It is a process facilitated by the IACHR the objective of which is for the state concerned and the alleged victims and/or petitioners to reach an agreement, outside of the contentious procedure, that makes it possible to resolve the alleged violation of human rights. The friendly settlement procedure depends on the will of the parties, and therefore both parties must agree to pursue and continue this procedure if it is to be used. To that end, the parties must inform the Inter-American Commission of their interest in doing so.

106. This section of the annual report is divided into four parts. The first provides information on the three working visits made this year whose objective was to promote the use of the friendly settlement mechanism and follow up on recommendations. The second part explains the seven friendly settlement agreements and the two agreements on implementation of recommendations made by the IACHR in merits reports. The third part explains the context of the 52 working meetings held by the friendly settlements and follow-up section. Finally, the fourth part provides information on the reports approving friendly settlement agreements adopted in 2015.

1. Working visits on friendly settlements

107. In 2015 the Friendly Settlements Section accompanied three commissioners in their capacity as country rapporteurs to three working meetings. The first was in Colombia, chaired by Commissioner and

Rapporteur José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez; the second, in Argentina, was led by Commissioner and Rapporteur Paulo Vannuchi; and the last was in Mexico, with Commissioner and Rapporteur James L. Cavallaro. Following are the results of the three visits.

Visit to Colombia

108. Commissioner José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, in his capacity as Rapporteur for Colombia, made a working visit to Colombia from May 4 to 6, 2015. The objective of the visit was to carry out activities related to the friendly settlement and precautionary measures mechanisms. Commissioner Orozco participated in two promotion activities in Bogotá, first in the Fourth National Seminar on Friendly Settlement Mechanisms, and then in the Second Workshop for training public servants on procedural aspects of the friendly settlement mechanism.

109. Rapporteur Orozco presided over nine working meetings on petitions and cases with the objective of giving impetus to friendly settlements and following up on recommendations made by the IACHR. In these efforts the parties signed two friendly settlements: one in Case 11,990, Oscar Orlando Bueno Bonett; and the second related to petition 108-00, the Segovia Massacre. Those agreements will be submitted to the IACHR for its approval to verify that they are consistent with the American Convention on Human Rights, at a time determined by the parties. In addition, four acts of understanding were signed to pursue friendly settlements in cases 11,144, Gerson González; 12,541, Omar Zúñiga; 11,538, Herson Javier Caro (Javier Apache); and in petition 577-06, Gloria González. At the same time, the parties signed minutes on the points agreed upon in the working meeting with the aim of moving forward in the friendly settlement in Case 11,007, the Trujillo Massacre. In addition, the parties signed an agreement on implementation of the recommendations made by the Commission in one report on the merits whose implementation is pending.

Visit to Argentina

110. Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi, in his capacity as rapporteur for Argentina, made a working visit for which the delegation went to Argentina from August 24 to 27, 2015, with the objective of observing the implementation of the IACHR's recommendations and holding working meetings.

111. During the visit the delegation went to the province of Salta to observe on site the advances in the implementation of the recommendations of the IACHR in Case 12,094 Asociación Lahka Honhat and its members. The delegation also held meetings with provincial and national authorities, with the Assembly of Caciques, and with the parties in the case. During the visit major gains were observed in implementing the recommendations of Report No. 1/12 of the IACHR, particularly in relation to the process of delimiting and titling the territory of the indigenous communities.

112. On August 27, 2015 Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi, in his capacity as country rapporteur, presided over six working meetings. The objective of three of them was to negotiate a friendly settlement agreement (P1213-07 - Graciela Ramos Rocha and P675-06 - Raúl Franklin Buganem et al and 12,854 - Ricardo Javier Kaplun and family). Another meeting was to follow up on a friendly settlement agreement (12,080 Sergio Schiavini and María Teresa Shack); the last two meetings were held to follow up on the decisions adopted by the IACHR in reports issued under Article 51 of the American Convention on Human Rights (12,324 - Rubén Luis Godoy and 12,632 - Adriana Beatriz Gallo, Ana María Careaga, and Silvia Christin de Maluf).

Visit to Mexico

113. On September 23 and 24, 2015, the Rapporteur for Mexico, Commissioner James L. Cavallaro, presided over six meetings in which he facilitated the coming together of the parties involved in petitions and cases in order to give impetus to friendly settlements and to follow up on recommendations made by the IACHR.

114. In this context, on September 23, Commissioner Cavallaro conducted two meetings. The first of these was with the parties involved in Case 11,411 (Severiano Santíz Lopez et al. (El Ejido Morelia)); in the first part of the event the parties signed an agreement on implementation of the recommendations made by the IACHR in Report on the Merits No. 48/97. To date the Commission is awaiting the second part, in which the signing of that agreement on implementation of recommendations will be completed with the victims' family members and the authorities of the state of Chiapas.

115. The second meeting on September 23 was with the parties in petition P-1014-06 (Antonio Jacinto López); the parties signed a friendly settlement agreement that includes measures of integral reparation. In the context of the signing of the agreement the Mexican State held a public ceremony acknowledging its international responsibility for the facts in which it apologized to the family of Antonio Jacinto López, for whom the IACHR had issued precautionary measures when he was assassinated. Once the parties so determine, the agreement will be submitted for the approval of the IACHR to verify that it is in line with the American Convention on Human Rights.

116. On September 24, Commissioner Cavallaro chaired four working meetings with the parties in the following cases: (1) 12,847 Vicenta Sanchez Valdivieso; (2) 12,915 Ángel Díaz Cruz et al.; (3) 12,550 Silvia Arce; and (4) petition P-1171-09 Ananías Laparra. In this case minutes of the working meeting were signed setting forth both the progress and the points pending implementation by the Mexican State with respect to the friendly settlement agreement signed September 5, 2014.

a. Friendly Settlement Agreements and Implementation of Recommendations

117. Friendly settlement agreements seek to bring the parties' positions closer so as to find common ground and reach a consensus-based agreement that is satisfactory to both. During the period covered by this report, seven friendly settlement agreements were signed, in the following cases:

Case 11,990, Oscar Orlando Bueno Bonett v. Colombia (signed May 6, 2015)

118. The case refers to the extrajudicial execution of youths Oscar Orlando Bueno Bonnet, Jhon Jairo Cavarique, and Jefferson González Oquendo, on January 10, 1997, by members of government forces in Saravena (Arauca) when they were moving about the urban center of Saravena on two motorcycles. In the agreement the Colombian State recognized its international responsibility for violating the rights enshrined in Article 4 (right to life) to the detriment of the youths Oscar Orlando Bueno Bonett, Jhon Jairo Cavarique, and Jefferson González Oquendo; as well as the rights enshrined in Article 5 (right to humane treatment), Article 8 (judicial guarantees), and Article 25 (judicial protection), all of the American Convention on Human Rights, to the detriment of the victims' next-of-kin. The agreement includes measures of satisfaction and non-repetition as well as economic compensation.

Petition 108-00, Segovia Massacre v. Colombia (signed May 6, 2015)

119. The petition refers to the events of November 11, 1988, in the municipality of Segovia, Antioquia, when a group of heavily armed men attacked the population with grenades and other firearms, which caused the death of several persons; many others were wounded. The events occurred as members of the Police and Army looked on yet failed to take the measures necessary to protect the population of Segovia, instead allowing those responsible to flee. In the agreement the Colombian State recognized its international responsibility for violating the rights enshrined in Article 4 (right to life) to the detriment of 38 persons, and Article 5 (right to humane treatment) to the detriment of six persons. The agreement includes measures of satisfaction and non-repetition, and economic compensation.

Case 12,704, Ramón Nicolás Guarino v. Argentina (signed May 14, 2015)

120. The case refers to violations of the rights to judicial guarantees and judicial protection to the detriment of Mr. Ramón Nicolás Guarino, in the context of a criminal proceeding, due to which he was

unjustly deprived of liberty, as the sentences in two convictions finding him guilty of different crimes were joined without taking into consideration that he had already served one of the sentences in its entirety. The parties stated that the agreement is based on humanitarian considerations, having verified the vulnerable situation of Mr. Guarino, and in particular the uncertainty stemming from his advanced age and his health. In this case the parties agreed to establish an ad hoc arbitral tribunal to determine the amount of humanitarian assistance to be paid to the petitioner.

Case 12,848 I.V.N.R. v. Panama (signed August 7, 2015)

121. The case is related to the infection of I.V.N.R., at 15 years of age, by the human immunodeficiency virus at the Complejo Hospitalario Metropolitano Dr. Arnulfo Arias Madrid, which is under the Social Security Fund (Caja del Seguro Social) of Panama. The infection of I.V.N.R. resulted from the negligence of the staff of the blood bank, who did not act in keeping with the standardized operational procedure for handling positive tests of donors. The facts of the case include possible violations of due process and of the guarantees of judicial protection in the proceedings pursued by the victims to access justice and adequate integral reparation. The parties established measures of economic reparation totaling one million nine hundred seven thousand seven hundred eighty-one dollars (US\$ 1,907,781), which includes medical and psychological care, compensation for material and non-material damages, plus an amount agreed upon for legal and expert fees.

Petition 577-06, Gloria González v. Colombia (signed July 16, 2015)

122. The facts of this case occurred on May 7, 2002, when members of the National Army entered the Juan XXIII Sector of the La Divisa neighborhood, in the city of Medellín, to carry out an operation in the home of the neighbor of Gloria González. The agents allegedly shot at a group of persons who purportedly belonged to the Colombian guerrilla forces, and a stray bullet entered the chest of the victim while she was breastfeeding her daughter Daniela Londoño González, as a result of which Gloria González died and the child Daniela Londoño González lost her right eye due to a perforation of the cornea by shrapnel from the bullet. According to the allegations, the victim was perceived in the community as a member of the guerrilla forces, and the child Daniela Londoño, ever since, has needed special treatment for cleaning, changing, maintaining, and lubricating the ocular prosthesis. The agreement contains measures of economic reparation, access to health services, and a ceremony to uphold the dignity of the victims. Special note should be taken, in this agreement, of the measure aimed at ensuring that the child has access to periodic treatment for maintaining, changing, and lubricating the ocular prosthesis for life.

Petition 1046-06, Antonio Jacinto López, Mexico (signed September 23, 2015)

123. The case refers to the arbitrary separation from the position of mayor of Antonio López Martínez, an indigenous peasant leader, who had been elected mayor on October 24, 2004, in Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca, for the 2005-2007 period. The victim suffered several threats to his life and physical integrity; such threats were also directed against his family members and lawyers. For this reason the IACHR issued precautionary measure No. 165-05 on July 29, 2005. Despite the measures of protection granted by the Commission, on October 17, 2011, Mr. López Martínez was assassinated in the city of Tlaxiaco. The agreement includes measures of justice, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and non-repetition. It should be noted that the State began to carry out the commitments acquired in the friendly settlement agreement by organizing the public ceremony for recognizing responsibility, which was attended, as witness of honor, by Commissioner Cavallaro, who in his speech emphasized the clauses of the friendly settlement agreement regarding the adoption of a protocol for implementing the precautionary measures of the IACHR and the duty to investigate and punish the acts committed.

Case 12,854, Ricardo Javier Kaplun, Argentina (signed November 10, 2015)

124. The case refers to the lesions inflicted on Mr. Ricardo Javier Kaplun, purportedly by police agents in the context of an arrest, which caused his death, as well as the lack of an effective investigation

aimed at prosecuting and punishing the persons responsible for these events. The Inter-American Commission provided its good offices to the parties to reach a friendly settlement and the parties signed an agreement in which the State recognized its international responsibility for the violation of the rights enshrined in Article 5 (right to humane treatment), Article 8 (judicial guarantees), and Article 25 (judicial protection) of the American Convention on Human Rights to the detriment of Ricardo Javier Kaplun. The agreement includes measures of justice, satisfaction, and non-repetition.

125. In the course of 2015 agreements on implementation of recommendations made by the IACHR in reports on the merit were signed in the following cases:

Case 10,455, Valentín Basto Calderón et al. Colombia (signed May 6, 2015)

126. The parties signed an agreement on implementing recommendations made by the IACHR in its Report on the Merits No. 4/14. The case has to do with the deaths of Valentín Basto Calderón, social and peasant leader, and Pedro Vicente Camargo, as well as the wounds inflicted on the child Carmenza Camargo on February 21, 1988. The facts occurred in the municipality of Cerrito, Santander, when persons in civilian attire acted with the acquiescence and collaboration of security agents of the State after the Army and Police had made death threats against Mr. Basto Calderón.

Case 12,799, Miguel Ángel Millar et al. v. Chile (signed May 8, 2015)

127. The parties signed an agreement on implementation of the recommendations made by the IACHR in its Report on the Merits No. 2/14. The case is related to subjecting a non-commercial private radio station, Radio Estrella del Mar de Melinka, to a power supply regime different from that provided by the municipal government to all other media outlets operating in that locality.

b. Working Meetings on Friendly Settlements and Follow-up

128. In 2015 the Inter-American Commission facilitated 52 working meetings between the parties in cases and petitions in the stage of negotiating friendly settlements, and follow-up on recommendations made by and agreements approved by the IACHR. Approximately 30 such meetings were held at IACHR headquarters during the Commission's regular periods of sessions in 2015, while 22 were held during working visits by the Commissioners, in their capacity as country rapporteurs.¹⁷

129. The SSAS attorneys held technical meetings with petitioners and representatives of the states. These meetings seek to give impetus to the use of the friendly settlement mechanisms and to follow up on the decisions of the IACHR. In the course of this year the technical team of the SSAS met with the Comisión de Familiares de Víctimas Indefensas de la Violencia Social de Argentina (COFAVI), the Centro Para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos de Guatemala (CALDH), the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL); the Center for Reproductive Rights; the Villegas law offices of Colombia; and the Centro de Derechos Humanos of Antioquia. Among the meetings with representatives of the states, the SSAS met with the foreign ministries of Mexico, Costa Rica, Argentina, Panama, and Colombia.

c. Reports Approving Friendly Settlement Agreements

130. According to Article 49 of the American Convention, if a friendly settlement has been reached the Commission will draft a report by which it verifies that the agreement is based on respect for the human rights enshrined in that instrument or in the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man.

131. In the course of 2015, the IACHR approved five reports on friendly settlement agreements: (1) Report No. 10/15, C-12,756, "El Aracatazzo" Bar Massacre; (2) Report No. 38/15, P-108-00, Segovia

¹⁷ An extensive explanation of the objectives and accomplishment of these visits can be found at subsection (a) of this section.

Massacre; (3) Report No. 39/15, P-279-03, Fredy Rolando Hernández; (4) Report No. 82/15, P-577-06, Gloria Gonzalez; and (5) Report No. 81/15, C-12.813, Blanca Olivia Contreras.

F. Activities of the IACHR in relation to the Political Organs of the OAS

132. One of the functions of the IACHR is to provide advisory services to the states in respect of human rights, and to promote public policies geared to strengthening respect for human rights as a key element of the processes of strengthening national capacities for implementing human rights. To carry out this purpose, the IACHR relates to and accompanies the political organs of the OAS, in particular the General Assembly (GA), the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP), and the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP), for the purpose of promoting minimum human rights standards in resolutions, declarations, treaties, conventions, and other inter-American instruments. It also maintains relations with other areas of the OAS.

133. In the context of this competence, in 2015 the IACHR consistently attended the meetings the member countries maintain in the Permanent Council, the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs, and the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs, and it responded when called on to present information on the implementation of resolutions with the participation of the commissioners, the Executive Secretary, and the specialists on human rights in the Executive Secretariat.

134. In March, April, and May 2015, representatives of the OAS member states, staff of several departments of the OAS, representatives of indigenous peoples and civil society, and the Rapporteurship on Indigenous Peoples of the IACHR met in the Permanent Council to hold the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Meetings of Negotiations for Seeking Consensus with a view to the eventual adoption of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

135. On March 3, the Executive Secretary participated in the Meeting with Permanent Observers on the 2015 Work Plan of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, at the invitation of the Secretariat for External Relations of the OAS, a forum in which the gains and accomplishments of the IACHR in 2014 were presented, as well as the challenges and Work Plan for 2015.

136. On May 7, 2015, the President of the IACHR, Commissioner Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, presented the 2014 Annual Report of the IACHR to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs.

137. Subsequently, the IACHR attended the 45th regular session of the OAS General Assembly, which was held June 15 and 16 at the headquarters of the OAS, in which – in an unprecedented turn of events – it did not have an opportunity to present its 2014 Annual Report. Once the agenda of the meeting of the General Assembly, focused on the strategic vision of the OAS, was known, the IACHR sent a letter asking that Article 41 of the American Convention on Human Rights be applied. According to Article 41, the IACHR is “to submit an annual report to the General Assembly of the Organization of American States,” which historically has been done by making a presentation to the plenary session of the General Assembly on the human rights situation in the hemisphere. The Commission makes an appeal so that, in its capacity as the principal organ of the OAS in the area of human rights, it is assured that it will be able to present its annual report in the successive regular sessions of the General Assembly.

138. During the 45th session of the General Assembly elections were held to fill the vacancies in various organs, agencies, and entities of the Organization. The IACHR had to fill four vacancies, and the result of the vote was as follows:

Table. 1 Vote for new members of the IACHR

Name	Country	Votes
Enrique Gil Botero	Colombia	26
Francisco Eguiguren Praeli	Peru	26

Margarette May Macaulay	Jamaica	25
Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño	Panama	25

139. During this General Assembly no resolutions or declarations were adopted, which made this Assembly exceptional; only the Plan of Action of the Social Charter of the Americas (AG/RES. 2878 (XLV-O/15)) and the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons (AG/RES. 2875 (XLV-O/15)) were adopted. The latter was signed on June 15, during the General Assembly, by the following states: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay. Special mention should be made, in this respect, of the technical advisory services provided by the IACHR to the states in the negotiation of that regional instrument, through its Unit on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

140. During the General Assembly the President of the IACHR, Commissioner Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, held bilateral meetings with some of the heads of delegation of OAS member states and permanent observers. These countries were Argentina, Bahamas, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Spain, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the European Union. During these meetings various human rights issues of mutual interest were discussed.

141. On July 29, 2015, during the session of the OAS Permanent Council, the Executive Secretary presented the agenda item called Preparations for celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture, in its presentation reference was made to the work done by the IACHR on this issue. He also urged the 16 member states of the Organization that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so, and announced the Third Conference on Human Rights and Good Practices: Prevention and Punishment of Torture. Subsequently, on November 6, the special session of the Permanent Council was held to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention. The meeting was requested by Chile and co-sponsored by Argentina. The dean of the Washington College of Law, Claudio Grossman, was invited to speak on the topic in his capacity as chairperson of the United Nations Committee against Torture, and former president and member of the IACHR. The IACHR has already begun to organize the Third Conference on Human Rights and Best Practices: Prevention and Punishment of Torture, to be held in the first months of 2016.

142. During the meeting of the Committee on Migration Issues of the OAS, the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child of the IACHR participated by offering observations on the main challenges to ensuring and protecting the rights of migrant children in the Americas. In addition, the applicable human rights standards were recalled, including the recent Advisory Opinion 21/14 of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on Rights and guarantees of children in the context of migration and/or in need of international protection.

G. Activities of the IACHR with Other Regional and Universal Human Rights Bodies

143. As a result of the restructuring of the Executive Secretariat¹⁸ the Inter-Institutional Relations Section was established with two objectives. The first is to strengthen relations between the IACHR and United Nations bodies, regional intergovernmental bodies, civil society organizations¹⁹, and national human rights institutions. The second objective is to coordinate institutional cooperation agreements signed by the IACHR.

144. This section describes the attainment of the proposed objectives. The first part presents the ties with intergovernmental bodies, first with the United Nations, then with other international bodies; it is

¹⁸ At chapter I, section A of this report one can find more details on the outcome of the restructuring of the Executive Secretariat.

¹⁹ Oftentimes the relationships with civil society organizations have resulted in joint events and promotion activities, which are reported in section H of this Chapter I.

followed by a description of relations with other regional human rights bodies. The second part lists the cooperation agreements signed by the IACHR in 2015.

1. Intergovernmental bodies

(a) United Nations

i) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

145. The cooperation between the IACHR and various United Nations bodies includes close coordination for planning joint activities and for sharing experiences and standards. The UN bodies have designated a focal point to help make their relationships more efficient.

146. The Inter-American Commission has worked closely with various United Nations bodies, as reflected in the signing of the Joint Declaration on Collaboration with the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights on November 19, 2014, in Washington, D.C. Pursuant to that declaration, both bodies cooperated closely in 2015. In that instrument joint lines of work were reaffirmed and therefore in 2015 there have been joint declarations and communiqués, periodic meetings, exchange of information in carrying out activities, and cooperation in drafting thematic reports.

ii) Human Rights Council

147. Mr. Joachim Rucker, President of the Human Rights Council, visited the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR on July 9. During his visit two possible activities were agreed upon to be carried out with a view to 2016: (1) that the IACHR would make an official visit to the Council as part of its next visit to Geneva; and (2) that the IACHR could present its work and functions in the context of a formal session of the Human Rights Council in 2016.

148. On September 15, 2015, Commissioner Tracy Robinson participated in the annual panel discussion on the integration of a gender perspective throughout the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, with a focus on gender parity. This meeting was held at the headquarters of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland.

iii) “Special Procedures” of the Human Rights Council

149. The UN Human Rights Council is authorized to create special procedures whose objective is to advise the Council in various thematic areas. The special procedures are conducted thanks to the work of independent experts in specific areas or on knowledge of specific countries. The special procedures system is a basic element of the human rights mechanism of the United Nations, for it encompasses all human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political, and social.

150. The close cooperation of the IACHR with the United Nations special procedures has been strengthened through the continuing contact with the focal points. This has been reflected in joint visits, joint communiqués, participation of UN rapporteurs in our consultations of experts, participation of the IACHR or the Secretariat in its consultations, and meetings to plan the activities of various mandates.

2. Visits of Rapporteurs, Independent Experts, and Working Groups to the IACHR

151. In 2015, the IACHR received the visit of seven rapporteurs, experts, and working groups of the United Nations. The visits took place during the three periods of sessions held in 2015²⁰ and also between periods of sessions. The objectives of the visits were to further ties of cooperation, share experiences, and plan activities. Following is a description of the visits.

²⁰ Detailed information on the three periods of sessions held in 2015 can be found at section B of this chapter.

152. John Knox, Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, visited the IACHR on March 23. During the visit he emphasized the risk run by defenders of the environment and mentioned that climate change will be one of his priorities.

153. Maina Kiai, UN Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, visited the IACHR April 21 for the purpose of having a dialogue with some persons from the Executive Secretariat (what was the dialogue about??).

154. Dante Pesce, representative for Latin America of the United Nations Working Group on the issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises, visited the IACHR on June 30. During his visit joint courses of action were explored, especially with the IACHR Unit on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

155. Maina Kiai, UN Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, paid a second visit to the IACHR. On this second occasion the meeting was held during the 155th period of sessions of the IACHR. The objective of this visit was to present his report *Endangered: Human Rights and Natural Resources in the Americas*. The presentation included the participation of IACHR President Rose-Marie Belle Antoine and Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression Edison Lanza. The event was moderated by IACHR Executive Secretary Emilio Álvarez-Icaza.

156. Christof Heyns, UN Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, visited the Secretariat on June 9. The objective of his visit was to share case-law, experiences, and information and to further ties, especially in relation to protection for the right to life.

157. Michel Forst, UN Rapporteur on human rights defenders, visited the IACHR on October 20. During the visit he met with staff of the Executive Secretariat, especially with the support staff of the IACHR's Rapporteurship on Human Rights Defenders.

158. David Kaye, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, visited the IACHR on October 26 to meet with the plenary of the IACHR.

159. Dainius Pūras, UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, visited the IACHR on December 16, 2014. The purpose of the visit was to meet with various teams of the Executive Secretariat, to engage in joint planning of activities, and to seek the strengthening of standards in relation to the right to health.

160. The Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law in practice visited the IACHR on December 11, the last day of their country visit to the United States of America.

3. Activities of the IACHR with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Special Rapporteurs, Working Groups, and Independent Experts

161. In addition to the visits to IACHR headquarters in Washington, D.C. by independent experts, special rapporteurs, and working groups, and by representative of the Office of the High Commissioner, the close cooperation is expressed through the participation of the Commissioners and of the staff of the Executive Secretariat in various activities with the United Nations, such as formal and informal meetings, meetings of experts, meetings for planning activities, and public hearings, among others. Following is a description, in chronological order, of the activities that reflect the relationship with these bodies.

162. On January 29, the United Nations Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises met with the Commissioners to explore different avenues of cooperation in the area of business and human rights. The then-representative for Latin America,

Ms. Alexandra Guáqueta, reported on overall progress in disseminating and implementing the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and mentioned possible areas of cooperation, which include the exchange of knowledge and information on the processes related to drawing up National Action Plans. The meeting took place in Washington, D.C.

163. On February 25, 2015, the staff of the Executive Secretariat made a presentation in the *2015 Workshop on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Promoting and Protecting the Human Rights of LGBTI people in Asia and the Pacific*. The event was organized jointly by the United Nations Development Program (hereinafter “UNDP”) and the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF). The workshop was held in Bangkok, Thailand.

164. Also in Bangkok, on February 26 a staff member of the Executive Secretariat made a presentation as part of the opening panel of the conference *Regional Dialogue on LGBTI Human Rights and Health in Asia-Pacific*. It was attended by more than 200 representatives of states, community leaders, members of civil society organizations, and international experts. The Conference is part of an initiative developed by the UNDP entitled *Being LGBT in Asia*.

165. On March 3, 2015, the Rapporteur on the Rights of Women, Tracy Robinson, participated in the event titled *Enhancing cooperation between the UN and regional mechanisms for the promotion and protection of women's rights* organized by the Council of Europe and the states of Belgium and Latvia. The event was held in Geneva, Switzerland.

166. On March 17, IACHR Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression Edison Lanza participated as a speaker at the closing session of the international meeting *The impact of media concentration on freedom of expression and democracy*, organized in Washington, D.C., by Observacom in coordination with UNESCO and the Open Society Foundations. The activity brought together various international experts, such as UN Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression David Kaye.

167. On March 26 and 27, staff of the Secretariat went to Asunción, Paraguay, to participate in the *Meetings for Jurisprudential Dialogue and Specialized Training on Transparency, Freedom of Expression, and Access to Public Information*, in the context of the 18th Ibero-American Judicial Summit. The meetings were organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression made the initial remarks after the opening ceremony.

168. From April 12 to 15, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression of the IACHR made an academic visit to Guatemala City. The activity was held together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR-Guatemala), and included the *Third Gathering of Community Radios: Freedom of Expression, Indigenous Peoples, and Governance in Guatemala*, organized jointly by the Instituto DEMOS, the Asociación Sobrevivencia Cultural, the Asociación Mujb’ab’l Yol, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and UNESCO. The meeting examined in depth the issue of the freedom of expression in Latin America and the right of the indigenous communities to establish and manage their own media outlets.

169. On April 24 two meetings were held to explore possibilities of joint work with staff of the FAO and ECLAC in Santiago, Chile.

170. On April 29, staff from the Executive Secretariat attended the meeting of experts on *The Promotion And Protection Of Human Rights In The Context Of Peaceful Protests*, organized by the United Nations and led by the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, Maina Kiai, and by the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Christof Heyns. The meeting was held in Santiago, Chile.

171. On May 13 and 14 the Executive Secretary participated in the meeting of experts *A comparative survey of enabling environments for businesses and associations*, organized by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, Maina Kiai, in Stockholm, Sweden.

172. Commissioner Felipe González, Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants of the IACHR, participated as a speaker in the meeting of experts *Moving away from the Death Penalty: Protection of the rights of persons facing death penalty abroad, including migrants*, organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The event was held June 16 and 17 in Geneva, Switzerland.

173. On June 15, 2015, José de Jesús Orozco, Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders of the IACHR, participated in a meeting at the International Organization of La Francophonie (IOF). The purpose was to achieve greater cooperation among the different mechanisms related to the protection of human rights defenders, as well as to adopt the conclusions reached during the “inter-mechanisms” meeting held in November 2014, which are geared to achieving greater efficacy in the protection of human rights defenders. On June 16, 2015, the Rapporteur attended the event on Attacks and Reprisals against Defenders, which was held at the Palace of Nations in Geneva. Both events included the participation of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders in Africa, representatives of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, the focal point of the OSCE/ODHIR, as well as the FIDH and the OMCT.

174. On June 24, Commissioner José de Jesús Orozco participated in the twenty-seven annual meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies. The objective of this gathering was to pursue the effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international on human rights.

175. On June 30, the Unit on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights participated in a colloquium held at the OAS on the occasion of the visit to Washington, D.C., of Dante Pesce, new Expert Member for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Working Group on the issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises.

176. On August 20, 2015, staff of the Secretariat participated as panelists in the seminar *Sexual and Reproductive Rights: Voluntary interruption of pregnancy in Chile from a human rights perspective*, held in Santiago, Chile. The convening organizations were the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Population Fund, the Pan American Health Organization, the World Health Organization, and the UN/Chile Inter-Agency Group on Gender and Human Rights.

177. On August 21, 2015, staff of the Secretariat participated in a videoconference organized by the Office in Bolivia of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *International Standards of Pretrial Detention and Human Rights*, geared to judicial officers in the criminal justice system (judges, prosecutors, and public ministries).

178. The Secretariat participated in a consultation on the right to life with Christof Heyns, UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, in Geneva September 3 and 4. The meeting took place in Geneva.

179. Commissioner Tracy Robinson, accompanied by the attorney who supports the Rapporteurship on the Rights of LGBTI Persons, participated as a panelist in the first Expert meeting on ending human rights violations against intersex persons. It was convened by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and was held September 16 and 17, 2015, in Geneva.

180. On October 14 and 15 the Executive Secretary participated in a consultation of experts organized by Pablo de Greiff, UN Special Rapporteur on promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence. The consultation was held in Stockholm.

181. From October 20 to 22, the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR participated, by means of written remarks, in the annual meeting of focal points of the United Nations and regional mechanisms, held in Strasbourg, France. During that meeting there was a recounting of the various joint activities of the different human rights mechanisms, as well as planning for 2016.

182. On October 22 the Secretariat participated in a talk on *Regional and global perspectives on impunity for CIA torture and the right to remedies and reparation*. The speaker was Juan Méndez, UN Special Rapporteur on torture. The meeting took place in Washington D.C.

183. On November 12 and 13, Commissioner James Cavallaro, together with the Executive Secretary and staff of the Executive Secretariat participated in a regional consultation on *Policing and Human Rights in Latin America: Progress and Challenges*. That consultation was organized in conjunction with the Regional Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), following up on the IACHR *Report on Citizen Security and Human Rights*. The meeting took place in Panama city.

184. On November 16 and 17, Commissioner Paulo Vanucchi, in charge of the Unit on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, participated along with the Secretariat attorney who works with that Unit in the Fourth Annual Forum of the United Nations Working Group on the issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises, which was held in Geneva.

185. On November 23, the President of the IACHR, Rose Marie Belle Antoine participated in the 8th session of the Forum on Minority Issues, organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. She also participated in a parallel event held November 26. The forum was held in Geneva.

186. On December 10 and 11, the Coordinator of the Registry Section participated in an Expert Consultation convened by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association in Florence, Italy. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues related to the Special Rapporteur's next thematic report on fundamentalism and its impact on assembly and association rights, to be presented to the Human Rights Council in June 2016.

187. On December 10, the Coordinator of the Registry Section participated in a Conference organized by the the Robert F. Kennedy Training Institute and the European University Institute (EUI), together with Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to Freedom of Association and of Peaceful Assembly, Martin Sheinen, former Special Rapporteur on Counter-terrorism and Human Rights and Frank La Rue, former Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression and current Director of Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Europe, celebrating the International Human Rights Day.

4. Joint Press Releases, Letters and Declarations of the IACHR and United Nations Special Rapporteurs, Working Groups, and Independent Experts

188. On some occasions and when so decided by the members of the IACHR, joint communications are issued with the persons who head up the special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council. This year, seven joint statements were released, as follows:

189. On January 7, the Office of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) joined the international outcry against the assassination of 12 persons in the attack on the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, based in Paris (France). He expressed his solidarity with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatoviæ and joined the condemnation by David Kaye, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

190. On May 13, anticipating the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, a group of experts in human rights from the United Nations and other international experts made an appeal to put an end to discrimination and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex children and youths. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, a group of United Nations experts, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe urged the governments to protect these youths and children from acts of violence and discrimination, and to translate their points of view into policies and laws that have an impact on their rights.

191. On May 25, 2015, coinciding with the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child of the IACHR along with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children, the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and UNICEF urged the states of the region to ratify that Protocol. The main initiative was sending a joint letter to the states of the region.

192. On July 22, the Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression of the IACHR, and the UN special rapporteurs on the situation of human rights defenders, promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, together called on the Venezuelan State to put an end to reprisals against human rights defenders in Venezuela.

193. On August 28, on the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances of the United Nations recognized the progress made in many countries of the region. Nonetheless, they called attention to the debt pending with the victims of forced disappearances of the past in relation to making a reality of the rights to truth, justice, and reparation. In addition, the IACHR and the Working Group expressed their profound concern over the continued forced disappearances in the region and the lack of due diligence on the part of the states to prevent, investigate, and punish such acts.

194. On September 24, Commissioner Tracy Robinson participated in a joint declaration with experts from the United Nations and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights urging the governments to take advantage of the opportunity of the adoption of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations to renew their commitments and to ensure respect, protection, and full attainment of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The joint declaration included the participation of UN experts Mr. Dainius Pūras, Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Mr. Michel Forst, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Ms. Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; Ms. Eleonora Zielińska, Chairperson of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice; and the experts from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Ms. Reine Alapini-Gansou, Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, and Ms. Soyata Maiga, Special Rapporteur on the rights of women in Africa.

195. On November 10, the Commission, the UN Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, together with the Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions issued a press release expressing their concern over the continued harassment of Ms. Lilian Tintori, the wife of Mr. Leopoldo López, in Venezuela.

i) Treaty bodies

196. The United Nations has nine bodies that have been established pursuant to human rights treaties that supervise the application of the main international treaties. The IACHR has cooperated more closely with those bodies by exchanging information on certain situations, calendars of activities, and the proposal to carry out joint activities and to jointly monitor resolutions.

ii) Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

197. In the context of the regional forum *Latin America: Free mobility, international protection of persons and processes of integration*, on April 28, 2015, an attorney from the Rapporteurship made a presentation on the provisions and standards developed by the inter-American human rights system in relation to the use of immigration detention. This forum took place in Quito, Ecuador, and was organized by the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Ecuador, the Inter-American Association of Ombudsmen, (South American chapter), the UNHCR, the International Detention Coalition (IDC), Asylum Access Ecuador, and the Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales (IAEN). The forum was geared to staff of ombudsmen's offices as well as members of human rights bodies and civil society organizations.

198. By invitation of the UNHCR, the attorney who supports the work of the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Migrants participated in the Meeting on the Brazil Plan of Action and the Role of Civil Society Organizations of the Americas on June 24 and 25, 2015, in Santo Domingo, Heredia, Costa Rica. During that meeting the attorney for the Rapporteurship made two presentations, the first on the different actions that the IACHR has been carrying out in relation to promotion and protection of the right to nationality and eradication of statelessness in the Americas; and the second on the main challenges identified in the region related to persons subject to international protection and the standards developed by the IACHR and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (hereinafter "I/A Court HR") to protect such persons. This activity was attended by a large number of members of civil society organizations from many countries of the Americas, UNHCR staff, and academics.

iii) United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)

199. The Secretariat has developed closer ties of communication with the office of MINUSTAH, especially in the area of human rights, for the purpose of exchanging information and being able to draw on its support for various activities of the IACHR in Haiti, including the translation of documents to French and support for the visits that the IACHR wishes to undertake.

iv) Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

200. On May 14, the Secretariat held a meeting with the director of the Office of the Legal Counsel and the human rights adviser of PAHO to further cooperation between the two agencies. Among the courses of action there was discussion of a possible meeting between PAHO and the IACHR.

201. On September 3, the Executive Secretariat participated in an event organized by PAHO, ECLAC, the Office of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, the OAS, and the IACHR. The objective of the meeting was to hold a dialogue on the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons. Due to the important role the Convention assigns to the IACHR, the meeting was very important for coordinating knowledge in the field with those international organizations that have been working on aging for decades.

202. On October 26, the Legal Counsel for PAHO and its lead specialist in human rights met with IACHR President Commissioner Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, First Vice President Commissioner James Cavallaro, and Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi to explore strengthening coordination and collaboration between the two institutions.

v) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

203. From April 13 to 15, 2015, the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child undertook a promotional visit to Honduras at the invitation of UNICEF and World Vision to monitor the situation of children affected by the conditions of violence and insecurity in the country and the conditions of adolescents deprived of liberty, and to analyze the measures for protecting migrant and returned children. Information was also collected on the operation of the new National System for the Protection of Children and the

National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor. Meetings were held with governmental authorities, judges, and civil society organizations.

204. On April 16, the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child participated in the Regional Meeting of UNICEF Representatives in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. The objective of the activity was to analyze the context in relation to the main challenges facing children in the hemisphere so as to draw up a strategic plan and identify the priorities for UNICEF's work in the next five years. Among the issues noted were the contexts of violence and insecurity in several countries of the region due to the presence of drug trafficking and organized crime, as well as the challenge of protecting migrant children.

205. On June 15, Patrick Geary, in charge of children's rights and business, held a meeting with the Unit on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child to share information and coordinate efforts in that area. That exchange was followed by phone conferences and an ongoing exchange of information.

vi) Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children

206. On July 6 and 7, 2015, Commissioner Ortiz participated as the main speaker at a global consultation of experts on armed violence in the community and its impact on the rights of children and adolescents, organized by the office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children, UNICEF, and the Republic of Honduras, in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. The Rapporteurship had the opportunity to share its main observations regarding how the violence generated by organized crime impacts children and adolescents in the region. In addition, after the consultation the Rapporteur held meetings with Honduran authorities in Tegucigalpa related to the climate of insecurity and violence in the country and its impact on the rights of children.

5. Other Organizations

i) International Committee of the Red Cross

207. On April 15, the Secretariat received a visit from Anton Camen, Legal Adviser for Latin America and the Caribbean. The objective of that meeting was to seek to have the Red Cross carry out training workshops for the IACHR and the staff of the Executive Secretariat in two areas, general introduction to forensic issues and the use of force. There was also discussion of the advisability of holding meetings with representatives of the Red Cross during each country visit by the IACHR, and the possibility of sharing calendars of travel and activities. On May 7 and 21, the Secretariat held meetings in Washington, D.C. with various representatives of the Red Cross.

208. The Red Cross held a workshop for the IACHR Secretariat on the use of force on October 29

ii) World Bank

209. Commissioner Tracy Robinson took a leading role in organizing the joint event with the World Bank, on Friday, October 23, to present the Bank's report entitled *Women, Business and the Law 2016*. The event, held in the context of the 156th period of sessions, included the participation of Commissioner Paulo Vannuchi, representatives of the World Bank, and women ambassadors to the OAS.

iii) The Hague Conference on Private International Law

210. On November 6, 2015, the representative for Latin America of the Hague Conference met with various teams of the IACHR Secretariat to follow up on a workshop held in 2014. The objective was to discuss aspects related mainly to four conventions: The Hague Convention of 1996 on the International Protection of Children; The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (1980);

the 2007 Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support; and the 1993 Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

6. Regional Human Rights Bodies

i) African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

211. An important mandate of the Inter-Institutional Relations Section has been to further ties with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and other regional bodies. In late 2014 the IACHR received the Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities of the African Commission, with whom the Secretariat exchanged points and strategies for litigation related to protecting indigenous peoples.

212. The Secretariat participated as a panelist in the *Regional consultative meeting on strategic litigation in Africa for the advancement of sexual identity and gender identity/expression*, organized by the non-governmental organization Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa (ISLA), held in Johannesburg, South Africa, July 6 to 8, 2015.

213. On September 15, a one-week visit began by senior staff of the Secretariat of the African Commission, including Ms. Mary Maboreke, Executive Secretary. During the week they received information on the work of the IACHR, and areas of possible joint work were identified.

214. On November 3, an initial thematic dialogue was held in Banjul, Gambia, among the African system, the inter-American system, and the United Nations on occasion of the sessions of the African Commission. That dialogue made possible the exchange of views, as well as the fruitful exchange of information regarding human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and the experience of each mechanism based on its mandates.

ii) Arab Committee for Human Rights

215. The Arab Committee for Human Rights visited the IACHR for the first time since it was established, from March 17 to 20. During that visit it held a meeting with the plenary of the Commission, and several meetings with staff of the Executive Secretariat. The five commissioners received a training workshop in the different areas of competence of the IACHR.

7. Agreements and memoranda of understanding signed during the year

216. In 2015 the following agreements and memoranda of understanding were signed:

Institution	Date	General objective
Danish Institute for Human Rights	March	Institutional cooperation
University of West Indies (St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago)	June	Institutional cooperation
National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (CONAPRED)	July	Institutional cooperation
Stanford University	July	Institutional cooperation and incorporation of a fellow to the IACHR
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)	September	Addendum to the General Cooperation Agreement
National Human Rights Commission of Mexico	September	Institutional cooperation
National Justice Council of Brazil	September	Institutional cooperation
International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR)	October	Institutional cooperation and incorporation of a fellow to the IACHR

H. Human Rights Promotion Activities

217. Promoting the observance and protection of human rights in the region is one of the fundamental pillars of the IACHR's mandate. This section describes the activities that the IACHR organized, participated in, and sponsored with different actors of the inter-American human rights system, including member states and their permanent missions before the OAS, civil society organizations, international organizations, and academia.

218. The section divides the activities depending on whether they were carried out by the members of the IACHR, the Executive Secretary, or Executive Secretariat staff.

1. Activities of the Office of the Executive Secretary

219. During the Meeting of the Federal Military Justice Authorities with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Commission, held February 9 to 12 in Brazil, and organized by the Superior Military Tribunal of Brazil, a Declaration of Intentions was signed with the National Justice Council, and various activities were carried out in the context of that meeting.

220. On March 2, the Executive Secretary was a speaker at the event "How the Inter-American Commission Responds to Human Rights Challenges in the Americas," organized by the Center for Civil and Human Rights of the University of Notre Dame.

221. In the context of the International Transgender Day of Visibility, March 31, the Executive Secretary offered opening comments at the "Interactive Workshop on Trans Identities," held at the OAS.

222. In addition, on April 10 and 11, the Executive Secretary attended the "Seventh Summit of the Americas," which was held in Panama City, Panama. There he also had the opportunity to meet with members of civil society and to participate in the panel discussion on "The International Decade for People of African Descent: Prospects, Challenges, and Strategies in the Americas," organized by the Latin American and Caribbean Network for Democracy (REDLAD).

223. On May 4 and 5, the Executive Secretary accompanied Commissioner José de Jesús Orozco, in his capacity as Rapporteur for Colombia, to participate along with the Friendly Settlement team of the IACHR in the "Fourth National Seminar on Friendly Settlements," held in Bogotá, Colombia.

224. The Executive Secretary participated on May 11 and 12, attending and making a presentation in the high-level plenary session of the "Global Forum 2015. Shaping Civic Space," which was called by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) and held in Stockholm, Sweden. In addition on May 13 and 14, in Stockholm, Sweden, he participated in the meeting of experts held under the heading "A comparative survey of enabling environments for businesses and associations," organized by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

225. On June 2 and 3, the Executive Secretary was a professor in the 2015 Specialized Program on Human Rights of the Academy of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law at American University, Washington, D.C.

226. In addition, on June 2 he participated in the presentation of the book "La lucha. La historia de Lucha Castro y los derechos humanos en México," an event organized jointly by the IACHR Executive Secretariat and the civil society organization Front Line Defenders.

227. On June 7, he also participated in a discussion of the work of the IACHR to address the challenges in the region during the "2015 AJC Global Forum," organized by the American Jewish Committee (AJC), and held in Washington, D.C.

228. On June 12, in New York, United States, he was a discussant as part of the roundtable on “Current opportunities and challenges in the Inter-American System,” as part of the event Engaging with the Inter-American Human Rights System for U.S. Advocacy, organized by the Human Rights Institute of the Columbia Law School.

229. On June 19, the Executive Secretary was a panelist in the event How to Elect the Best Judges? The Selection Processes of High Courts in Latin America, to address the issue “Standards of suitability and transparency in judicial selection,” which was held in El Salvador and organized by the Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho (FESPAD), the Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF), and Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDDH: Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos) of El Salvador.

230. He also participated by videoconference in the colloquium “The Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights: History and Legal-Institutional Framework,” held June 26 during the 1st Cycle for Training on Journalism and Human Rights, which was co-sponsored by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the IACHR, and co-organized by the Training Center of Spanish Cooperation in Uruguay, the South America Regional Office of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, and the United Nations system in Uruguay.

231. On July 14, 2015, at the IACHR headquarters, the Executive Secretary gave a talk for a group of judges and officials of the Ministry of Justice of Argentina in which various topics were addressed on the functions of the inter-American human rights system and the Commission.

232. On August 4 the Executive Secretary was a speaker via videoconference at the Fourth Inter-disciplinary Course on Human Rights, held in Fortaleza, Brazil, with the topic “The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.” The event was organized by the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and the Instituto Brasileiro de Direitos Humanos.

233. On August 20, together with Commissioner James Cavallaro, the Executive Secretary participated in a working meeting in Guatemala whose objective was to discuss “The Human Rights Situation in Guatemala.” On this occasion he also participated on a panel “Notes on the Workings of the Inter-American Human Rights System,” which was geared to instructors and students of the legal sciences of several local universities.

234. On September 2, the Executive Secretary participated in Puerto Rico as a panelist in the 2015 Civil Liberties Congress, “Positive Citizen Performance vis-à-vis the Power of the State,” with the topic “The fight against impunity through independent civilian oversight.” The event was organized by the American Civil Liberties Union of Puerto Rico.

235. From September 4 to 9 the Executive Secretary was in Mexico to participate in various activities, among which special mention should be made of the meeting on September 7 between the IACHR and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights with the presence of OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro, in Mexico City, Federal District. The discussion focused on the relationship of the Commission and Court with the General Secretariat, noting in particular that the inter-American human rights system is a fundamental pillar of the OAS.

236. He also held working meetings with federal and local governmental authorities of Mexico, academic authorities, and members of civil society. These included a presentation at the “Fix-Zamudio” Diplomate Program for Training in the Inter-American Human Rights System on the topic “Victims’ access to the system, the importance of the inter-American human rights system and the IACHR,” which was organized by the Institute of Legal Research at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). He was also a speaker at the opening session of the Fourth “Sergio García Ramírez” University Competition on Human Rights, held at the Law School of the UNAM.

237. On October 14 and 15, the Executive Secretary travelled to Stockholm, Sweden, to participate in the high-level dialogue on guarantees of non-repetition “From Aspiration to Policy” Challenges and Lessons Learned in Preventing Mass Violations,” which was organized by the United Nations Rapporteur on truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-recurrence, in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, where he participated as a panelist in the second session, on the growing contribution of regional and international organizations.

238. From November 1 to 4 he participated as a speaker in the “Third international specialized course on human rights: Access to the international systems of protection,” and in the opening session of the “Second international competition - Medellín protects human rights,” which was organized by the Office of the Mayor of Medellín, the Institución Universitaria Salazar y Herrera, the IACHR, and the Instituto Colombiano de Derechos Humanos.

239. On November 12 and 13 the Executive Secretary attended the “Regional Consultation: Policing and Human Rights in Latin America: Progress and Challenges,” in Panama City, Republic of Panama. It was attended by 14 countries of the region, eight international and regional human rights organizations, representatives of universities, and members of civil society organizations, and it was co-organized by the IACHR, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Development Program, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

240. On November 17 the Executive Secretary participated as a panelist in the Regional Forum on Human Rights: Migration and Human Trafficking, on the topic “Human Rights in Central America,” which was held in Managua, Nicaragua.

241. On November 18 and 19 the Executive Secretary participated in the 2015 Central America Donors Forum, in San Salvador, El Salvador, where he made a presentation on “Migration: Opportunities and Challenges Faced by Public Policy and Philanthropy.”

242. From November 19 to 22, the Executive Secretary participated as a speaker at the Third Forum: The Rights of All Girls and Women (Los Derechos de Todas), on the panel called “Justice and guaranteeing human rights in the peace accords,” held in Cali, Colombia. He also participated in a colloquium on the inter-American human rights system, which was for students at the Fundación Universitaria Católica (Unicatólica).

243. On the 3rd and 4th of December the Executive Secretariat was a speaker in the “EU-NGO Forum 2015: Protecting and promoting civil society space”, in Brussels organized by the European External Action Service and the European Commission in conjunction with the Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN).

244. On December 8 the Executive Secretary was a speaker in the round table “Justice for all: Challenges in Honduras” activity that was held in Tegucigalpa, organized by CEJIL.

9. Activities of the Office of the Assistant Executive Secretary

245. The Assistant Executive Secretary participated in the Conference on Strategies for Tackling Torture and Improving Prevention, Wilton Park and the University of Bristol, March 30-April 1, 2015, Winston House, England.

246. The Assistant Executive Secretary was a panelist at the Symposium Engaging with the Inter-American Human Rights System for US Advocacy; she participated at the panel “Overview of the Inter-American System”. The event was organized by The Bringing Human Rights Home Lawyers’ Network and Colombia University, June 12, 2015 NY, NY.

247. On June 20, 2015 the Assistant Executive Secretary was the keynote speaker at the International Conference on Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) at the George Mason University in Virginia, USA. She delivered a presentation on “Protecting and Promoting the Human Rights of Women”.

248. On July 9, 2015, the Assistant Executive Secretariat participated as a moderator at the Expert Consultation organized by the UN Special Rapporteur Juan Mendez and the Washington College of Law on Extraterritorial Application of the Prohibition of Torture and other Ill Treatment and Attendant Obligations.

249. The Assistant Executive Secretariat participated at the conference Challenges of the Inter-American Human Rights System, where she delivered a presentation on the “Challenges concerning the pillar of protection”. This event was organized by CELS, Conectas, Dejusticia, DPLF, IDL and Fundar and took place on September 8, 2015 in Mexico City, Mexico.

250. On October 13, 2015, the Assistant Executive Secretariat was a presenter at the Inter-American Defense College in Washington, DC where she delivered a presentation on the “Inter-American Human Rights System”.

251. On October 14, 2015, the Assistant Executive Secretariat was a presenter at the Fourth Annual Seminar on the Caribbean and the Inter-American System, held at the George Washington University, Washington, DC, where she delivered a presentation on “The Individual Petition System”.

252. On December 4, 2015 the Assistant Executive Secretariat was a speaker at the 2015 Legal Summit of the Americas, at The Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice. She delivered a conference on “The Current Human Rights Issues in Latin America”.

253. On December 17, 2015 the Assistant Executive Secretariat was a speaker at the Annual Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Seminar held at the Inter-American Defense College in Fort McNair, Washington DC. She spoke on “The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and Transitional Justice”.

a. Activities of the Protection Group

254. Among the human rights promotion activities of the Executive Secretariat’s Protection Group, special mention should be made of the coordination and implementation of the “Workshop on Precautionary Measures for Human Rights Defenders,” held August 25 in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, which included the participation of 24 defenders from Honduras who wanted to know about the precautionary measures mechanism before the IACHR, as well as the practical elements of that mechanism.

255. On the same date, in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, the Group coordinated and conducted the “Workshop on Precautionary Measures for LGBTI Activists,” which was geared to activists of the LGBTI community interested in learning about the precautionary measures mechanism before the IACHR and in acquiring the tools to be able to use it. The event included the participation of 21 LGBTI activists from Honduras and Nicaragua.

b. Activities of the Court and Merits Groups

256. Staff from the Court and Merits Group participated in the Seminar “The implementation of the international law of human rights. Inter-American Standards on Due Process in Bolivia” This activity was held in Sucre, from May 28th to May 30.

257. The Coordinator of the Court and Merits Group delivered a conference about the concept of integral reparation at the International Course on Human Rights; she also acted as a judge at the International Competition on Human Rights. Both activities were held in Medellin, Colombia on November 2015.

258. On November 16, 2015, the Coordinator of the Court and Merits Group participated in a session of the Legislative Assembly from El Salvador where a discussion was taking place about the adhesion of that State to the Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons

c. Activities of the Friendly Settlements and Follow-up Section

259. On May 4 and 5, the “Fourth National Seminar on the Friendly Settlement Mechanism” took place in Bogotá, Colombia, at the Universidad Externado de Colombia. The objective was to promote use of the friendly settlement mechanism as an alternative to the contentious procedure in the inter-American human rights system. This forum for dialogue made it possible for civil society organizations and Colombian government officials to learn about the impact of the friendly settlement agreements that have been approved by the IACHR, identifying both good practices and the challenges that need to be tackled to ensure the effective use of the mechanism, so as to benefit the protection of victims’ rights.

260. From May 27 to 29, the forum “Challenges for Integral Reparation under the Standards of the Inter-American Human Rights System” was held, geared to public servants and members of civil society organizations who work on issues related to the protection and advocacy of human rights before the inter-American system. The staff of the Executive Secretariat participated on the panel “Friendly Settlements in the inter-American system as a possibility for attaining integral reparation for the victims of human rights violations.”

3. Other promotion activities of the Executive Secretariat

261. In March 2015, materials were prepared as part of the activities of the IACHR during the last decade for inclusion in the book “Democratic Governance OAS: 2005-2015,” which was produced and presented on May 19 by then-Secretary General of the OAS José Miguel Insulza.

262. Materials were produced and logistical support provided for the participation of the President of the IACHR, Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, May 8 and 9, in the seminar Afro-Latin American Studies, where she addressed the issue “International Agencies: Programs, Opportunities, Priorities,” held at the Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

263. On May 13 a short seminar was given on the inter-American human rights system entitled: “Strategic Implications of Human Rights and the Rule of Law,” to 40 students from the National Defense University. That seminar was prepared to complete the course given by Professor Patrick Paterson and was held at OAS headquarters. The students were from 14 Latin American countries and were mid- and high-level government officials whose work is directly related to drawing up policies on human rights or supervising their countries’ security forces.

264. On May 21, Executive Secretariat staff gave a talk on the inter-American human rights system to the almost 300 participants in the 20th Annual Inter-American Moot Court Competition, at the Washington College of Law, in the context of its Program of Advanced Studies on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, in Washington, D.C. After the talk those in attendance were given various publications of the Commission.

265. On June 1, 2015, a short seminar on the inter-American human rights system was given to a group of 65 students who participated in the summer course of the 2015 specialized program in human rights” of the Academy of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, American University, Washington, D.C.

266. On June 2, 2015, in Washington, D.C., along with the organization Front Line Defenders, the IACHR organized the presentation of the book “La lucha. La historia de Lucha Castro y los derechos humanos en México,” a graphic novel that narrates the personal history of Lucha Castro and six other Mexican human rights defenders.

267. On June 12, Commissioner Tracy Robinson was a discussant in the roundtable on “Current opportunities and challenges in the Inter-American System,” during the event Engaging with the Inter-American Human Rights System for U.S. Advocacy, organized by the Human Rights Institute of the Columbia Law School in New York, United States.

268. From June 22 to July 13, 2015, a set of ten courses and orientation events was organized for the IACHR’s summer interns. Those events consisted mainly of interactive presentations in the various areas of the Executive Secretariat, as well as a roundtable discussion with the Executive Secretary.

269. On July 23, IACHR President Rose-Marie Belle Antoine participated as a panelist in the presentation of the report “Community Consent Index 2015: Oil, gas, and mining company public positions on Free, Prior, and Informed Consent,” published by Oxfam, in Washington, D.C.

270. Along with the American University Washington College of Law (WCL), Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIDH), the Commission organized the “Fifth course on the Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights,” held in Washington, D.C. from July 20 to 24, in tandem with the 155th regular period of sessions of the IACHR. This course was geared to public officials, who were given practical tools on the inter-American system for the protection of human rights, as well as strategies and best practices for applying human rights provisions nationally.

271. A considerable number of members of the IACHR and staff of its Executive Secretariat participated as speakers in the “Fix-Zamudio” Diplomate Program for Training in the Inter-American Human Rights System, held in Mexico City, Mexico, from August 27 to September 11, in the context of the agreement signed between the Inter-American Commission and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). The diplomate program included the participation of 76 students and was organized by the Institute of Legal Research (IIJ: Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas) of the UNAM.

272. On September 8, First Vice President of the IACHR James Cavallaro and Commissioners Rosa María Ortiz, José de Jesús Orozco, and Felipe González, along with staff of the Executive Secretariat, participated in the meeting called by civil society organizations that are part of the Focal Group on Businesses and Human Rights, where there was conversation on key issues in the area of business and human rights.

273. On October 9, Executive Secretariat staff gave a talk on the inter-American human rights system to 16 students from the Washington College of Law, and later the participants visited the offices of the Commission and were given several publications by the IACHR.

274. The fourth annual training seminar on the inter-American human rights system for CARICOM diplomats and government officials took place on October 13 and 14 in collaboration with the George Washington University Law School (GWULS). It included the participation of approximately 18 diplomats from the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Barbados, Dominica, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Both IACHR President Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, by teleconference, and Susan Karamanian, Associate Dean of GWULS, addressed the opening session of the seminar.

275. From October 14 to 23, in Washington, D.C., and in tandem with the 156th regular period of sessions of the IACHR, together with American University Washington College of Law (WCL), Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, and the IIDH, the Commission organized a course on “The Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights,” geared to members of civil society. The objective of the course was to give provide the participants practical experience about the inter-American human rights system as well as strategies and best practices for implementing human rights provisions nationally.

276. On October 21, in the context of the 156th regular period of sessions of the Commission, a workshop was given to members of civil society regarding the contents and use of the IACHR’s statistics

system. In this respect, in 2015 the IACHR introduced a new statistics system that is available at its website. That multimedia section presents statistical information about the activities of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights through graphs that show information on petitions, cases, and precautionary measures (available by year, by country, and comparatively).

277. On October 21 and 22, during the 156th period of sessions of the IACHR, two training workshops were conducted on the functioning and optimal use of the Individual Petition System Portal of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, one for members of civil society, and the second for the OAS member states. The Commission launched the Portal in the summer of 2015 as a novel tool for transmitting documents that enables states and petitioners to access electronically information on the matters being processed before the IACHR. In addition, the Portal makes it possible for the parties to send communications and annexes, in addition to consulting documents put out by the Commission.

278. On October 22, 2015, in the context of the 156th period of sessions of the IACHR, a panel discussion was held on the presentation of the IACHR report “Refugees and Migrants in the United States: Families and Unaccompanied Children,” which addresses the situation of the families and unaccompanied children – refugees and migrants –arriving at the southern border of the United States. The report resulted from a country visit by the IACHR in 2014.

279. In addition, on October 23, at the headquarters of the Commission and in coordination with the World Bank, a roundtable discussion was held to present the World Bank report entitled “Women, Business and the Law 2016: Getting to Equal.”

280. On October 29, staff of the Executive Secretariat gave a talk on the inter-American human rights system to 19 master’s students in international studies from the Université Laval of Quebec City, Canada. After the talk the participants visited the offices of the Executive Secretariat and were given several publications by the Commission.

281. From November 3 to 7, 2015 the second International Human Rights Competition “Medellín Protects Human Rights” took place in Medellín, Colombia. It was organized by the Office of the Mayor of Medellín, the Instituto Colombiano de Derechos Humanos (ICDH), and the Instituto Universitario Salazar y Herrera, with the sponsorship of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The competition was organized to foster study, dissemination, promotion, and training in the area of human rights, with special emphasis on the procedure before the organs of the inter-American human rights system, and it included the participation of 40 universities of the region. In that same context, from November 3 to 14, the “Third specialized international course in human rights: Access to international systems of protection” was given; it was geared to 120 community-based human rights activists in the city of Medellín. The speakers included staff members of the Executive Secretariat.

4. Activities of the Rapporteurships and of the Unit on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

282. On March 1 and 2, staff of the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child participated in the “International Public Forum on the Protection of Working Children and Adolescents from a Human Rights Approach,” organized by the Latin American and Caribbean Movement of Working Children and Adolescents (MOLACNATS: Movimiento Latinoamericano y del Caribe de niñas, niños y adolescentes trabajadores), held in Asunción, Paraguay. The Rapporteurship placed emphasis on the protection of this group of children and guaranteeing their rights, especially the rights to education, health, and a dignified life. The event included the participation of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and UNICEF.

283. On March 19, the Office of the Special Rapporteurship on Freedom of Expression and the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child organized a working meeting with representatives of the states and civil society organizations in order to receive from the participating states information on public policies and practices that they have been developing around the protection and promotion of the rights of children and

adolescents associated with their freedom of expression and implementation of the obligations that stem from the American Declaration and the American Convention in conjunction with the *corpus juris* in this area. The representatives of civil society presented, among other topics, on existing challenges to implementing that agenda in the region and the importance of strengthening the promotion of the rights to freedom of expression and access to information, and not only the protection of children and adolescents in the media. The working meeting included the presence of the Adviser in Communication and Information for Mercosur and Chile, Guilherme Canela; former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression Frank La Rue; the Director of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, Susan Linn; Karina Quintanilha Ferreira of Article 19 Brazil; and the representative of the National Council of the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Brazil (CONANDA), Pedro Hartung, among others.

284. On April 8, Commissioner Felipe González made a presentation in the context of the “Colloquium on Migrant Children: The Advisory Opinion of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights,” organized by the Center for Human Rights of the Universidad Diego Portales in Santiago, Chile.

285. Also on April 8, staff of the Executive Secretariat made a presentation as part of the panel “Children’s Rights in LGBT Families in Latin America,” organized by the Washington University College of Law, the Impact Litigation Project, and the Lambda Law Society.

286. On May 7, 2015, the Caribbean Human Rights Center (Centro de Derechos Humanos del Caribe) held the “Third Forum on Human Rights” at the Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla, Colombia. In the context of that forum an attorney from the Executive Secretariat made a presentation about the work and mechanisms of the IACHR for the protection of migrants and other persons in the context of human mobility in the Americas. The forum included the participation of university students, professors, members of legal clinics, and human rights defenders from the Caribbean coast region of Colombia.

287. On May 8 and 9, IACHR President Rose-Marie Belle Antoine participated in the Afro-Latin American Studies seminar, held at the Radcliffe Institute of Harvard University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She participated on a panel in which she addressed the topic “International Agencies: Programs, Opportunities, Priorities.”

288. On May 14, 2015, staff of the Executive Secretariat participated in a panel to mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia, at the headquarters of the OAS in Washington D.C., geared to OAS staff and the general public.

289. On June 12, a staff member of the Executive Secretariat participated as a panelist in a symposium on violence based on prejudice against LGBTI persons in the Americas, held at the White House in Washington, D.C. The talk addressed the inter-American human rights system and the Rapporteurship for the Rights of LGBTI Persons. The event included the participation of more than 35 representatives of civil society organizations from Latin America and the Caribbean who are part of the coalition of 40 LGBTI organizations that work in the context of the OAS.

290. On June 18 and 19, IACHR President Rose-Marie Belle Antoine participated in an academic event on sacred sites of indigenous peoples in the United States that was organized by the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission and the University of Arizona. There, she held meetings with members of the indigenous peoples of the San Carlos Apache Tribe, the Pueblo de Laguna, and the Navajo Nation. She also visited the sacred sites of Mount Taylor, in New Mexico; and Oak Flats and San Francisco Peaks, in Arizona.

291. On July 1, at the invitation of World Vision Brazil, Plan International Brazil, the Fundação Abrinq-Save the Children, ChildFund Brasil, and Aldeais Infantis SOS, the Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child, Rosa María Ortiz, participated as the main speaker in the “International seminar on violence against children and adolescents in the post-2015 agenda,” in Brasília, Brazil. The purpose of the event was to discuss what type of measures are needed to eradicate violence against children in the context of the Sustainable

Development Objectives for 2030, among them the need to strengthen the national systems for the protection of children, in particular at the local level, and support for families and the community.

292. On July 8 and 9 the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child was present at the annual meeting of the regional directors of the organizations that make up the Global Movement for Children in Latin America, in Panama City. The objective of its participation was to share the priorities of the Rapporteurship and to further aspects of cooperation between civil society organizations and the Rapporteurship in the development of its mandate, as well as to explore opportunities for collaboration in projects and for financing some activities.

293. On July 30, IACHR President Rose-Marie Belle Antoine and specialist Rosa Celorio participated in the “Seminar on the rights of indigenous peoples and Afrodescendants,” in Panama City, Panama. The convening organizations were Alianza para la Conservación y el Desarrollo (ACD, Panama), Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia y Sociedad – Dejusticia (Colombia), Derecho, Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (DAR, Peru), Due Process of Law Foundation, and Oxfam. The event was attended by members of indigenous peoples from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Peru.

294. On August 10, in São Paulo, Brazil, a seminar was held on “Migration and Brazil: Gains and Challenges for a New Law,” which was organized by Conectas. At the seminar Commissioner Felipe González, Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants, made a presentation on the provisions and standards of international human rights law regarding migrants. The seminar also addressed the issues of the status of Brazil’s immigration agenda, as well as the challenges of adopting a new Law on Migration that is in keeping with the human rights obligations contracted by Brazil.

295. From August 10 to 12, IACHR President Rose-Marie Belle Antoine visited the cities of Cali and Bogotá, Colombia, to receive information on the human rights of Afro-Colombians. In the context of the visit meetings were held with various authorities, and with civil society representatives who work on matters related to Afrodescendant persons. At the same time, President Antoine participated in an academic event held at the Universidad ICESI of Cali, where she gave a lecture on the rights of persons of African descent in the inter-American human rights system.

296. On August 12, staff of the Executive Secretariat participated in a workshop organized specifically for leaders of organizations that defend the rights of trans persons in El Salvador regarding the precautionary measures mechanism, at IACHR headquarters.

297. On September 3, Commissioner Tracy Robinson gave the keynote address at the “Puerto Rican Human Rights Congress: Gender and Sexuality.” During this visit, on September 4 Commissioner Robinson met with authorities from the Procuraduría de la Mujer (Office of the Ombudsperson for Women’s Rights) and the secretaries of justice and education to discuss priority issues affecting the rights of women, LGBTI persons, education, and poverty, among others. That same day she held a meeting at the Law School of the Universidad Interamericana with civil society organizations, law professors, and victims of human rights violations.

298. Rapporteur Tracy Robinson also presented a keynote address on “Rights of LGBTI persons and women’s rights” at a conference on human rights, gender, and sexuality organized by the Civil Rights Commission of Puerto Rico, in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

299. On September 4 and 5, the Unit on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights coordinated and carried out the fifth “Regional Consultation on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” in Costa Rica, with the co-sponsorship of CEJIL Mesoamérica, geared to civil society, social movements, and trade unions of Central America. That consultation was held at the offices of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and afforded an opportunity for dialogue on economic, social and cultural rights issues in Central America, and for taking stock of the priority concerns in the region so as to incorporate these into the work plan of the Special

Rapporteurship on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In the context of holding that consultation, a panel discussion was also organized at the headquarters of the Court, for the general public, to address the case-law of the inter-American human rights system in relation to Article 26 of the American Convention on Human Rights.

300. On September 10, the Rapporteur on the Rights of the Child was invited by the Human Rights Commission of the Federal District (CDHDF) of Mexico to participate on two panels with staff of this agency, civil society organizations, and academics. The first addressed the main trends and issues in relation to the rights of the child in the region and in Mexico, and included information on the mandate of the IACHR and the Rapporteurship regarding promoting and protecting the rights of the child. The second panel was focused on the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescent females and sexual violence against them. The same day the Rapporteur held a working meeting with approximately 20 civil society organizations convened by the la Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México (REDIM) to analyze various issues related to protecting children's rights and the standards of the inter-American human rights system.

301. A staff member of the Executive Secretariat participated as a speaker in the Model OAS Assembly held at the Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla from September 16 to 18. The topic for discussion at this Model Assembly was "Initiatives to promote tolerance of and eliminate discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex (LGBTI) persons in the Hemisphere." The presentation was focused on basic notions of sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation; as well as the resolutions of the OAS on human rights and sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

302. The staff member who supports the Rapporteurship on the Rights of the Child drew up the hypothetical case for the Second International Competition – "Medellín Protects Human Rights," organized by the Office of the Mayor of Medellín, the Instituto Colombiano de Derechos Humanos (ICDH), and the Instituto Universitario Salazar y Herrera, with the sponsorship of the IACHR. That competition has been organized to further study, dissemination, promotion, and training in the field of human rights, with special emphasis on the procedure before the organs of the inter-American human rights system. The call was open to students from all the law schools of Latin America; more than 20 universities of the region participated. The competition was held in the city of Medellín from November 2 to 6.