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## ***First Inter-American Conference on Human Rights and the Exchange of Best Practices on Friendly Settlements.***

The Training Center of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) in La Antigua, Guatemala, provided the venue for the First Inter-American Conference on Human Rights and the Exchange of Best Practices on Friendly Settlements on June 7 and 8, 2013.

The Inter-American Commission held this conference during the implementation stage of the recommendations for strengthening the inter-American human rights system for the purpose of exchanging best practices on protection of human rights, contributing to the collective construction of inter-American public order, and promoting the use of the friendly settlement mechanism among users of the system.

The event was attended by representatives of 15 OAS member states (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname and the United States of America) as well as representatives of the following civil society organizations: Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR), Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Colombian Commission of Jurists, DEMOS, Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF), Estudio para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer (DEMUS), Fundación Pro Bono, Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM), and Instituto de Defensa Legal (IDL).

Special guests at the Conference included Ambassador Jorge Hevia, Permanent Observer of Spain to the OAS; Manuel Lejarreta Lobo, Spain's Ambassador in Guatemala; Pablo Gómez de Olea Bustinza, Director General for Ibero-America of the Spanish International Cooperation Agency For Development (AECID); and Roberto Cuellar, Director of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIDH). Welcoming remarks were delivered by José de Jesús Orozco, President of the IACHR; Jesús Manuel Gracia Aldaz, Secretary for International Cooperation and Ibero-America of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain; Héctor Iván Espinoza, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, and José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the OAS

The event began with a presentation delivered by Emilio Álvarez Icaza, Executive Secretary of the IACHR, on general aspects of the friendly settlement procedure, the evolution of the mechanism, and the Commission's role as facilitator.

The program featured two panels where representatives of states and civil society exchanged information about friendly settlement best practices, in particular regarding the negotiation of

agreements, their content, and compliance with and the impact of agreed-upon reparations measures. The panel of presenters for the states included Javier Salgado (Argentina), María Beatriz Bonna Nogueira (Brazil), Assad J. Jater Peña (Colombia), Antonio Arenales Forno (Guatemala), Nimia Da Silva Boschert (Paraguay), and Alejandro Alday (Mexico).

The panel of presenters for civil society was made up of Alejandra Vicente, CEJIL; Alejandra Cárdenas, Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR); Gabriela Kletzel, Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS); María Gabriela Filoni, Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM); Federico Andreu, Colombiana Commission of Jurists; and Maynor Alvarado, Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM).

In addition, participants expressed their thoughts about the future of the friendly settlement mechanism, its challenges, the lessons learned and suggestions for making it more effective, during an open discussion moderated by the IACHR's Executive Secretary.

The seminar concluded with the presentation of certificates to the speakers and reflections by the IACHR Executive Secretary, Emilio Álvarez Icaza, in which he drew attention to the IACHR's role and responsibility for creating opportunities for dialogue to move friendly settlement processes forward, the use of technology to bring parties together, and the challenges the IACHR faces in monitoring compliance with friendly settlement agreements.