



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP (SIRG)
Fifth Regular Meeting of 2008
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Remarks by José Miguel Insulza, Secretary General of the Organization of American States

I'm honored to participate once again at the SIRG, the last time we saw each other was in July 24th, date in which the Draft Declaration of Commitments was presented to member States, here at the OAS. Let me start by welcoming all participants – Ambassadors, National Coordinators, International Organizations, Observer States to the Organization of American States.

The summits, in essence, plays a fundamental role in the creation of spaces for dialogue in order to promote democracy, peace and the opportunity for all members states to come to the forefront of this renewed engagement with the other countries of our Hemisphere, in a spirit of solidarity and cooperation to tackle the many challenges we face.

The SIRG (Summit Implementation Review Group) that is going to take place in the days ahead will serve as a practical dynamic forum not just for negotiating the declaration, but for fomenting ongoing dialogue and integration in the Hemisphere, striving for consensus on how to deal with priority issues of a multinational, multilateral nature.

The OAS plays a critical role in promoting this very same dialogue. In fact, we can say today that the region is having a conversation with herself, a conversation that it never had before in its history.

It is not strange to anyone gathered here, that it was at the Quebec Summit where a hemispheric consensus was reached to start the negotiations of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. And it was later in that same year that the Inter American Democratic Charter was signed by all Member States.

This fundamental document of the Inter-American system has given us certain standards in order to promote many elements of democracy and it has been used extensively since its approval, and it certainly has in the course of my tenure as SG of the OAS in the resolution and in the settlement of conflicts. Its finality is not only the defense of democratic governments but also the promotion of a democratic culture and values.

We can rightfully say today that Latin America has successfully concluded what has been denominated the transition to the democratic system and is heading towards the consolidation of democracies.

The promotion of democracy has to be understood today in the promotion of concrete and real benefits to the population at large. In this sense, Democracy has to generate shared benefits for everyone and the challenge is how we can all reap the benefits of democracy.

The participation of citizens in the realm of politics relates every more with greater demands of the population in the improvement of their quality of life and in the generation of sustainable development and better welfare.

Growth, employment, poverty, environmental sustainability, energy security, discrimination and crime are all issues that can be resolved with the democratic adoption and implementation of effective and efficient public policies. The Summit Process is looking for a multidimensional way to strengthen democracy and governance, helping to reduce poverty and increase opportunities in the Americas.

The three concepts embodied in the theme selected by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, "*Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security, and Environmental Sustainability*", will be at the heart of the discussions of our Heads of State at a particularly important time for inter-American relations.

The Summits of the Americas process—now 14 years old—has been able to join forces with all the entities of the inter-American system to face the challenges posed at the hemispheric level by new global realities. The Summits demonstrate the importance of good regional governance in the context of globalization and the need to seek joint solutions to problems that are truly transnational and hemispheric in nature—problems to which all of us can and must help find solutions.

One of the key elements of the Summits process resides in furthering the institutionalization of the process in the architecture of existing Inter-American Ministerials, and in context of OAS, it is an important aspect to reflect upon in preparation for Fifth Summit.

The role of the OAS as technical secretariat to most Ministerials is a formidable mean for ensuring interface in dialogue and integration into OAS policy dialogue and programming to support Member States.

These dialogues, Ministerial meetings, forums and discussions enrich the work of our Governments and particularly the host of the next Summit, in being able to receive different points of view and provide ample opportunity for reflection as we head toward the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

Furthermore, it is with genuine appreciation that I recognize the tremendous contributions to the Summit process of the institutional members of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), several of which are represent here, including the IDB, World Bank, ECLAC, PAHO, ILO and IOM. The 12 members of the group, which include the IDB, World Bank, ECLAC, CAF, PAHO, IICA, ILO, IOM, ICA, CDB and CABEI, and which is chaired by the OAS, have committed to contributing resources and technical and analytical support to achieving the goals of the Summits of the Americas.

We find ourselves today in the midst of the negotiation process that will carry us to Trinidad and Tobago in 2009. To date, we have been able to negotiate a total of fifteen paragraphs, 6 of which have been approved in the last two SIRGs. The task that lies ahead is as vast as it is remarkable. As we are approaching our next Summit, momentum is building on the drafting of the commitments of Port of Spain and we are deepening our dialogues in order to achieve consensus on the matters of the day. I am confident that the work of the 5th regular meeting of the SIRG, held here at the OAS, will be as productive as exciting and I'm sure that significant advances will be achieved.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of the Summits as an all-inclusive process and constructive engagement with all stakeholders, (i.e. Ministerials, SIRG, JSWG, Civil Society, private sector, youth, etc). This participation is facilitated by the OAS/Summits of the Americas Secretariat, to ensure that their perspectives are considered in Summit context, and as a key element of democratic governance and accountability.

In this sense we should be able to strengthen and to institutionalize even more the process in order to make the Summits an integral part of the Inter-American System.

Experience tells us that mandates which are most conducive to implementation through concrete actions, and to achieving the desired results, share several key, common characteristics. In short, they should be **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound**. Embedding these characteristics in the Declaration of Commitment of the Fifth Summit presents both a challenge and an opportunity for all of us in the Americas. Our collaborative response will be a measure of the collective will to achieve meaningful, sustainable results for the benefit of everyone in the Americas.

This vision is possible thanks to the capacity that we have to measure the present environment using objective and measurable indicators that are consistent in all of our countries and constantly updated by our sister institutions. Indicators that are based on standard criteria such as health determinants, alphabetization ratio, quality of secondary education, access to justice, transparency and the protection of the environment, among others.

It is of the utmost importance that the Summit demonstrate enhanced capacity to effectively deliver on commitments, show results, mobilize necessary resources, strengthen partnerships, meet the expectations of citizens. I'm a strong believer that multilateral process is the best approach to confronting common challenges.

Thank you once again.