



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP (SIRG)
Second Regular Meeting of 2008
July 24, 2008
Liberator Simon Bolivar Room - OAS Headquarters
Washington, DC

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REPORT OF THE MEETING

1. Opening Remarks

The meeting began with the salutations by the Chair, Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, Coordinator of the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas and Special Envoy for the Americas of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, to the high ranking hemispheric authorities attending the Second Regular Meeting of the SIRG in 2008. Ambassador Rodriguez thanked in particular the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, National Summit Coordinators and the Member States Representatives to the OAS in Washington for their presence at the meeting.

The National Coordinator indicated that the presentation of the Draft Declaration of Commitment for which the Second Regular Meeting of 2008 of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) was convened, represents an important milestone in preparation for the negotiations of the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, which will be adopted at the Fifth Summit of the Americas to be held in Trinidad and Tobago on April 17-19, 2009.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Chair presented the agenda of the meeting (document GRIC/O.2/doc.1/08 rev.1) for the consideration and approval of the delegations. The agenda was approved and the floor was offered to the Secretary General of the OAS.

3. Welcoming Remarks

In his opening remarks, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, José Miguel Insulza, referred to the fact that the three concepts included in the theme of the Fifth Summit of the Americas are directly linked to and represent the primary concerns of the region.

With regard to the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, the Secretary General expressed the view that it was a very complete document with a comprehensive approach; its importance derives from the fact that the results of the Summits of the Americas have served as a guide to the OAS and its member states, since the states regard the mandates emanating from the Summits as a strategy applicable to many long-term activities.

The Secretary General emphasized that conditions were propitious for completing the negotiations on the final Declaration, since, among other things, there was a pool of information provided by various agencies and organizations in the inter-American system, including comparable, objective indicators in the member states.

The Secretary General further pointed out the way in which the host government of the Fifth Summit had highlighted the importance of improving implementation of agreements reached, and of ensuring compliance with criteria that allow for long-term monitoring and follow-up. Secretary General Insulza added that the OAS was endeavoring to develop methodologies and practical capacities to that end.

The complete text of the Secretary General's speech can be found at: http://www.summit-americas.org/SIRG/SIRG_0708/speech_insulza_sp.doc

4. Presentation on the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain

Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, expressed his country's pleasure at presenting the draft Declaration of Commitment. He reminded delegates that Trinidad and Tobago was strong in its belief that the Summit presented a tremendous opportunity for the Hemisphere to reexamine its situation and to assess the implications of global developments with a view to taking the necessary actions that will put the Americas on a sustainable path forward.

The Ambassador's presentation highlighted the following:

- The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to building consensus for the document among all member states and extensive consultations were undertaken with all stakeholders during its development;
- Trinidad and Tobago views the Summit as one which deepens the integration and cooperation process through the use of transnational solutions for transnational issues;
- The success of this process depends on the forging of a viable implementation strategy geared at achieving specific targets within set timeframes;
- In order to get governments and institutions to focus on the key areas which form the basis for sustained future progress in the Americas the Government of Trinidad and Tobago combined the elements of the two documents produced in the past, namely a Declaration and a Plan of Action, into a single, coherent and integrated document - a Declaration of Commitment;
- The preparation of this document was guided by pragmatism. The issues are a feasible mix of previous mandates that continue to be relevant and new mandates that are considered to be essential;
- The 25 mandates and 11 targets in the Declaration are those that can be addressed by multilateral action and include mandates and targets agreed to during ministerials and the meetings of other institutions in the hemisphere;

- The Declaration is presented in six sections as identified in the concept paper presented in April, 2008, viz: (a) Promoting Human prosperity, (b) Promoting energy security, (c) Promoting environmental sustainability, (d) Strengthening Public security, (e) Strengthening Democratic Governance, (f) Strengthening the Summit of the Americas, Follow up and implementation effectiveness;
- The Declaration of Commitment recognizes the resource limitation of some member states and a recommendation has been made for regional institutions to take a leading role in ensuring that the mandates are implemented by using their resources, expertise and knowledge;
- It is proposed that the Summit of the Americas be held every three years so that the leaders could better assess and strengthen their oversight of the process;
- With respect to tracking progress, it is important for countries to reach an agreement, with the support and advice from institutions, on appropriate indicators to measure advances, and
- The Summit will be of tremendous importance to the new Heads of State in the region since it would provide them with the opportunity to exchange new ideas and approaches, as well as to discuss the renewal of the inter-American agenda adopted within the framework of the OAS.

The Ambassador concluded by expressing appreciation for the support given to Trinidad and Tobago and the hope that engagement in a process of constructive reflection and dialogue on hemispheric challenges would continue, with a view to successfully advancing the negotiations on the Declaration of Commitment.

He informed the member states that the third regular meeting of the SIRG for 2008, which will begin the negotiations of the Declaration of Commitment, will take place September 18-19 in Barbados and thereafter SIRG meetings will be October 16-17, November 13-14 and December 11-12 . He reiterated Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to working towards the production of a final document which would bear testimony of commitment of greater hemispheric solidarity and cooperation.

The complete text of the Statement by Ambassador Rodriguez may be found at
http://www.summit-americas.org/SIRG/SIRG_0708/speech_lar_en.doc

5. Interventions by Member States

The delegations of Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominica, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Dominican Republic, Saint Lucia, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela made presentations at this meeting.

In general, delegations:

- Thanked Ambassador Rodriguez for presenting the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain and highlighted the quality of the text;
- Noted the effort made by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in drafting a document that as a result of a consultation process, reflects the concerns of Member States and includes perspectives from the OAS as well as the partner institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), civil society organizations, the academia and experts. All these were considered in seeking to fulfill expectations and respond to the needs of the peoples of the Americas;
- Reaffirmed their support for the theme selected by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the Fifth Summit of the Americas;
- Confirmed their participation in the negotiations that will begin in September at the SIRG meetings;
- Reiterated their commitment to the Summit Process and their support for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago as host of the Fifth Summit;

Delegations also made specific comments, the salient points of which are as follows:

Peru:

- Thanked Trinidad and Tobago for having presented the challenges of the hemispheric agenda in the Draft Declaration from a new perspective, and described as innovative the format of the Declaration and the implementation of Summit mandates; and
- Announced that it would shortly be initiating a process of internal consultations with all the relevant national sectors to review this Draft, so that it would be in a position to present Peru's contributions at upcoming meetings of SIRG devoted to negotiation of the text.

Canada:

- Stated that the presentations made at Ministerials as well as consultations with other summit stakeholders have enriched background discussions and will continue to show their importance in the coming months;
- Pointed out that the OAS through its Summit Secretariat was playing an important role in ensuring that the consultations process is carried out within an institutional framework;
- Assured member states that Canada was looking forward to engaging them in discussions on the renewed agenda as contained in the Declaration of Commitment and supported the proposal to convene summits every three years;
- Advised that the effectiveness and coherence in the inter-American system could be increased if strong lines of communication and accountability are drawn between commitments made at the Summit and hemispheric inter-sectoral/institutional work

plans. It was observed that this process was being discussed at many ministerials and recommended that the collaboration between the National Secretariat, the OAS and the many ministerials be continued; and,

- Expressed its agreement with the National Secretariat's statement that the aspirations and goals of the Americas depend on effective democratic governance and agreed with the proposal for adopting more realistic and focused targets.

Chile:

- Expressed the view that this Summit would have a Caribbean stamp, and would reflect a special political moment in the history of the Hemisphere, and renewed consultation and cooperation in an effort to define and advance the priority items of regional importance;
- Stated that it views the Draft Declaration of Commitment as a comprehensive, strategic document with a focus on implementation, and spoke to the importance of including the recommendations emanating from the sectoral meetings.
- Referred specifically to the strengthening of democracy, the quality of life of the peoples of the Hemisphere, energy security, environmental sustainability, the positive contribution of trade policies as a source of growth and employment, the issue of gender, and the strengthening of the Summits process as a key factor for revitalizing it by strengthening follow-up starting at the end of 2009 and by taking concrete steps to improve the effective implementation of its mandates; and
- Emphasized that the Draft is based on shared values and principles geared to action, and to that end it defines a cooperative strategy, including support from United Nations organizations and institutions of the inter-American system; this should enhance the technical and political productivity of this Summit.

El Salvador:

- Expressed the view that the Draft Declaration is inclusive, was formulated with transparency, reflects the priority areas of interest of countries, and addresses multidimensional issues with multi-sectoral implications for the development of the nations of the Hemisphere;
- Indicated that the specific dates, the mandates already in place, and the attainable objectives proposed by the Draft are an alternative to the accumulation of mandates that have been implemented to widely varying degrees for a variety of reasons. As regards the mandates, it emphasized that they are focused, viable, and based on synergies among the different stakeholders in the process, on the hemispheric agenda; and
- Requested that stakeholders be receptive during the negotiating process so that timely subjects of hemispheric interest linked to the central theme of the Summit are incorporated into the document, including subjects such as cooperation with middle-

income countries, food security, protection of migrants, and the strengthening of preparation to cope with natural disasters, among others.

Grenada:

- Expressed that it was critical to keep the national coordinators fully engaged in the Summit process. It observed that mandates reflecting the high expectations of the member states, in prior summits, were not always implemented and cautioned that if this pattern continued, the faith in the Summit process will be eroded;
- Advocated that the 5th Summit should be seen as the promise keepers Summit, as well as the Summit of commitment to take action, to provide security for the citizens of the hemisphere, stabilize societies and facilitate prosperity for all;
- Indicated that the 5th Summit provided member states with the opportunity to revisit prior mandates with a view to implementing them;
- Cautioned delegations about the danger of eroding the substance of the document in the search for consensus;
- Observed that the document contained a concrete approach to implementing the vision of hemispheric leaders; and,
- Emphasized that this was not a Trinidad and Tobago Summit but rather a Summit of the Americas being convened in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Antigua and Barbuda:

Called for the implementation of all old and new mandates and expressed its country's desire to see provisions made in the Declaration of Commitment for the commencement of negotiations on a hemispheric trade agreement.

Guatemala:

Congratulated the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodríguez, and his team on their work on the Draft Declaration of Commitment for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, and confirmed its commitment to the Summits process and its offer to continue cooperating to ensure that the declaration will be successfully concluded and meet the expectations of member states.

United States:

- Indicated that there was no need to reiterate old mandates;
- Advised that the number of new mandates should be narrowed down and a much more focused document with realistic meaningful commitments should be encouraged;
- Recommended that before including any mandates, governments and members of the Joint Summit Working Group should confirm that the target is realistic and that there are sufficient resources to meet that target, failing that, the target should be altered or removed;
- Advised that one of the ways to achieve human prosperity is to strengthen the region's ability to compete in the global market place. In this regard attention was called to the second Americas Competitiveness Forum , August 17-19, 2008, in Atlanta, Georgia;
- Recognized the important role that renewable energy could play in dealing with climate change when advancing energy security, and recommended that the focus should be on clean air technologies in responding to this issue;
- Advised that in regard to environmental sustainability, the Summit of the Americas should address environmental challenges including biodiversity, water and sanitation, deforestation and urban development;
- Advocated the need for a balanced tone in the Declaration and urged that it support rather than detract from global negotiations conducted within UN framework as well as major economies' meetings;
- Welcomed the inclusion of the section on Strengthening Public Security as well as the focus on strong democracies, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Stated that summits must move from rhetoric to concrete action and that there should be a strong element of accountability on efforts to implement past commitments;
- Proposed that the OAS's role should be to help governments in meeting their targets and that it should be the responsibility of governments, civil society, the Private Sector and the JSWG to identify clear mandates with achievable targets; and,
- Recommended that in an effort to facilitate negotiations, the government of Trinidad and Tobago, before each SIRG meeting, should identify the specific paragraphs for discussion, convene a series of technical workshops on each of the thematic issues, as well as encourage technical presentations by members of the JSWG.

Saint Lucia:

Observed that the theme of the Declaration of Commitment incorporated issues and concerns of relevance to the region particularly within the current situation of global economic slowdown, increases in energy and food prices, increased levels of poverty as well as crime and violence.

Brazil:

- Emphasized its interest in human development and aspects of social development throughout the Draft Declaration; hence, gave Brazil's full support to the strong social component in the document, and highlighted the country's advances in this area, as reflected in the most recent national report published by Brazil;
- Indicated that the fact that this Draft Declaration of Commitment is more condensed than the one emanating from the Fourth Summit of the Americas is positive, as long as essential concepts are not left out of the final document;
- Stated that the analyses, priorities, commitments, and mandates are well organized, which facilitates their understanding;
- Expressed the view that it was a good document and a good starting point for the ensuing debates. Added that the issue of deadlines for mandates should be treated cautiously and realistically, bearing in mind the social and economic diversity of the countries of the Hemisphere;
- On the issue of energy security, requested that the Draft Declaration include a paragraph on access to energy, and recognized that such access is a key element of economic and social growth and the sustainable development of the Hemisphere;
- Also referred to the subject of bio-energy and biofuels as a possible factor of importance in meeting the major challenges of today—sustainable growth, energy security, climate change, and the fight against hunger and poverty;
- Gave a complete presentation on the potential inherent in the use of biofuels and in the domestic benefits achieved in social, economic, agricultural, and environmental fields, while at the same time suggesting an additional debate on aspects related to trade, regulatory frameworks, and specifications for biofuels, along with environmental sustainability, democratic governance, and security, among other issues;
- With regard to environmental sustainability, expressed the view that account must be taken of the global process of debate and negotiations currently taking place in the United Nations; at the same time, urged that what is negotiated in this Hemisphere continue to be coordinated with negotiations in broader forums, such as the Climate Change Convention, for instance;

- Touched on the subject of effective implementation of mandates emanating from the Fifth and previous Summits, indicating that it supported the emphasis placed on implementation by the Government and National Coordinator of Trinidad and Tobago;
- Concluded by saying that it expected to work to ensure that these mandates will lead to the actual adoption of measures with a positive and direct impact on the nations of the Hemisphere.

Guyana:

- Pointed out that the areas of concern contained within the theme of the 5th Summit present challenges which cannot be effectively overcome by any one country or sub region;
- Expressed its government's appreciation of the approach adopted by Trinidad and Tobago with respect to the structure of the draft Declaration of Commitment; and,
- Opined that the new structure which called for the prioritization of the issues and tangible outcomes of mandates would allay the public skepticism which appears to be present during summit engagements.

Dominica:

Informed that its government was of the opinion that the theme of the 5th summit was not only timely but necessary given the present challenges in the hemisphere.

Uruguay:

Stated that it in its view the subjects addressed in the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain were well-conceived, important, and timely, and singled out the stated intention to strengthen the Summit follow-up process and improve the effectiveness of implementation.

Colombia:

- Announced that it would initiate a series of consultations with different government sectors, the private sector, and civil society, to ensure their valuable inputs to the process of negotiation of this Declaration;
- Highlighted the priority that country attaches to including public security and making reference to the worldwide struggle against drugs, viewed as critical for the entire Hemisphere; and
- On the subject of energy security, proposed that when reviewing and evaluating energy systems based on limited use of carbon, other alternatives be discussed.

Jamaica:

- Advocated that member states should adopt the process of looking at the areas for which there is no doubt that the technical solutions exist, those for which solutions remain to be defined or which have not been the subject of consensus, and those for which there are no technical solutions;
- Agreed that the format presented by Trinidad and Tobago would allow for implementation;
- Advised member states to promote and forge collaborated and collective responses;
- Indicated that Jamaica agreed to the approach proposed for the 5th summit and pointed out that the support of institutions will be critical in meeting the targets outlined;
- Reiterated its government's concern about the lack of implementation and follow-up of Summit mandates, and recommended that the focus of the Summit should be on implementation; and,
- Noted that the business of ensuring that the resources particularly financial resources are available is a formidable task.

Bahamas:

- Expressed its government's appreciation for the inclusion of environmental sustainability in the draft Declaration of Commitment and informed that this was of particular importance to the Bahamas and the wider Caribbean;
- Advised that countries can move beyond the rhetoric to concrete action by ensuring that their technical agencies are kept fully engaged in the Summit process and that mandates are submitted to them for implementation; and
- Informed that the Bahamas had already begun the process to facilitate implementation.

Barbados:

- Informed that several of the issues highlighted in the document were discussed by the Ministers of Finance at the recent meeting held in Cancun Mexico;
- Indicated that its government supported the proposal to convene summits every three years and the decision to combine the Declaration and Plan of Action into a Declaration of Commitment;

- Informed that Barbados would be hosting the Third Regular SIRG Meeting of 2008 and supports United States' proposal that technical workshops be convened ahead of the future SIRG meetings; and,
- Agreed with other delegations that the document presented was an excellent basis for negotiation.

Bolivia:

- Expressed its conviction that the OAS has had and will continue to have a key role to play in the Summits of the Americas process;
- Pointed out its agreement with the priorities assigned in the Draft Declaration of Commitment to democracy, social aspects (a key part of Bolivian foreign policy), energy security, and environmental sustainability, and expressed satisfaction with the references made to the 1966 Declaration of Santa Cruz and the 2006 Declaration of Santa Cruz + 10;
- Indicated its support for the reference to possible commitments to be undertaken in the context of the Social Charter of the Americas, that could also be expanded to other items that have been on the hemispheric agenda for a number of years;
- With regard to the most vulnerable groups, expressed the view that it would also be appropriate to include migrants, since the issue of migration has become a key item on both the hemispheric and the global agenda.

Mexico:

- Asserted that the commitments made by heads of state and government at the upcoming Summit of the Americas will have a positive medium-term impact on the well-being of the peoples of the Hemisphere, and offered its full support to the process, so that heads of state will adopt a document that reflects hemispheric priorities and contributions made by previous Summits;
- Expressed the view that a brief, realistic, and specific Draft Declaration, that incorporates a gender perspective as a cross-cutting matter and identifies the most relevant points in each of the three thematic areas will greatly facilitate the negotiating process. In the regard suggested that the advisability of including paragraphs on the subject of public security and democratic governance be reassessed, since it is important to bear in mind that although they are binding issues, that have been and will be addressed in other forums, such as at the meeting of ministers in the area of public security, to be hosted shortly by the Mexican government;
- Indicated that there should be greater integration between the Summits of the Americas process and ministerial and inter-American meetings on specific subjects, and expressed

the wish to see the next Summit produce measurable and feasible mandates that will result in tangible benefits for our countries and strengthen hemispheric cooperation.

Venezuela:

- In commenting on the Draft Declaration of Port of Spain, stated that human prosperity drives member states to a relentless search for justice and social inclusion; this entails a need to make efforts to improve the standard of living of the people of the Hemisphere, by adopting and implementing mandates. On the subject of energy security, announced its participation in the dialogue on energy cooperation experiences in the Hemisphere; and, with regard to environmental sustainability, expressed agreement with following very closely discussions in the United Nations, observing the consequences of climate change, and considering natural disasters.
- On democratic governance, expressed agreement with reference to the strengthening of democracy through citizen participation and participatory democracy; and
- On the subject of Summits follow-up and the effectiveness of implementation, expressed the opinion that it was highly relevant to mention it, to prevent the Fifth Summit from being just one more summit, and to ensure that mandates that offer answers to the people of the Hemisphere are carried out and completed.

Argentina:

- Stated that the competent authorities would conduct internal consultations so that, at future meetings, it could make proposals to enrich the Declaration, always bearing in mind that the end objective is the well-being of the people.
- Also expressed its firm wishes for the success of the Fifth Summit.

Dominican Republic:

Welcomed the fact that this document invites member states to make a commitment and then to take action so that the items agreed on at the Summit do not remain on paper.

Closing remarks by Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez:

- Thanked delegates for their expressions of support and informed them that he will take note of their comments;
- Acknowledged the presence of the members of the Joint Summit Working Group and invited them to contact the Summits Secretariat if they wish to submit their comments on the proposed Draft Declaration of Commitment;

- Reminded delegations that the venue for the next SIRG scheduled for September 18-19 would be in Bridgetown, Barbados and informed that the National Secretariat will be contacting them in the coming weeks with additional information to facilitate their travel; and,
- Concluded by thanking the Government of Barbados for their continued support and their offer to host the Third Regular Meeting of the SIRG of 2008.

6. There having been no more requests for the floor the meeting was adjourned.