



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP (SIRG)
Fifth Regular Meeting of 2008
November 17-19, 2008
Liberator Simon Bolivar Room – OAS Headquarters
Washington, D.C

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REPORT OF THE MEETING

1. PREPARATIONS

At the fourth Regular meeting of the SIRG for 2008, which was held in St John's Antigua, the Chair, Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, Coordinator of the National Secretariat for the 5th Summit of the Americas and Special Envoy for the Americas, of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, had indicated to member states that they would continue their deliberations on Paragraphs 15-29, under the theme of Human Prosperity at the Fifth SIRG. He also requested that comments on Energy Security (paragraphs 30-38) be submitted to the National Secretariat on or before October 31, 2008 so that the National Secretariat could begin its preparations on the issues.

On November 12, 2008, the most recent revision of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, (Gric/DC-v/doc-1/08 rev.2 was circulated to all National Coordinators, and Permanent Missions, as the working document for the Fifth SIRG. A copy of the revised Declaration was also sent to the members of the Joint Summit Working Group. This revised version took into consideration the comments made and submitted by member states, as well as those paragraphs which were approved ad referendum in St John's Antigua.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair, Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, opened the meeting with salutations and thanked in particular the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Jose Miguel Insulza, for offering to host the Fifth SIRG at the Headquarters of the Organization in Washington D.C.. He expressed appreciation for the support to Trinidad and Tobago reflected by the presence of the large number of Delegates, the Secretary General, as well as the Assistant Secretary General. He further thanked the delegates for moving the Summit process forward under sometimes difficult circumstances as was evidenced in Antigua and Barbuda in the aftermath of Hurricane Omar.

Ambassador Rodriguez presented the agenda of the meeting (document GRIC/DC.-V/doc.1/08 rev. 2) for the consideration and approval of the delegations. There being no comments or amendments, the proposed agenda was approved. The Chair then offered the floor to the Secretary General of the OAS for his presentation.

3. OPENING SESSION

a) Welcoming Remarks

In his opening remarks, Secretary General Insulza adopted a cautionary tone emphasizing to delegates the importance of making the Summit relevant to the present day situation. He recommended that delegations should keep the economic events which are occurring globally at the forefront of the SIRG discussions since these events have now forced the Summit to take a different form. He further informed that a number of countries and financial institutions have begun to respond to the global crisis and that information on the agreements emanating from the G20 meeting which was held in Washington would prove very useful to the participants of the SIRG. He revealed that it was notable that the Presidents of Brazil, Argentina and Chile as well as the Prime Minister of Canada were present at the G20 meeting. He opined that the election of the new President of the United States presents an opportunity for dialogue with a view to finding a new direction in hemispheric relations.

The Secretary General stated that the topics of the Summit are relevant, but in the region there is a growing fear of unemployment which pervades all sectors, consequently it is imperative that the Summit be seen as a beacon of light for the future. Secretary General Insulza stressed that current conditions have to be taken into consideration by the SIRG if the Summit is to be relevant to the peoples of the Hemisphere.

The Secretary General also mentioned that prior Summits have demonstrated 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. He opined that these problems can only be resolved through the collective efforts of all Member States. He also reminded the delegates that at the opening of the last Summit the text of the Declaration was not complete and he expressed the hope that this would not be the case for the Fifth Summit. Secretary General Insulza urged participants to have the will to arrive at consensus on the many issues being discussed so that a complete document relevant to the issues of the region could be presented to the Heads of State for their approval at the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

b) Remarks by Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez

Ambassador Rodriguez began his remarks by giving an update on the progress achieved in the negotiations of the draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain. He reminded delegations that 6 paragraphs had been approved at the last SIRG and 23 were still to be considered under the theme of Human Prosperity. He also reminded delegations that Hurricane Omar which they experienced in Antigua and which severely affected the agricultural sector and the lives of the citizens of that country, should have heightened the importance of the negotiations of the draft Declaration and the need for delegations to find practicable responses that address the challenges of human prosperity, energy security and environmental sustainability. He cautioned that not everyone would be in agreement with the way that the challenges should be addressed but that the fundamental purpose of the Fifth Summit would be met if measurable targets and the assignment of responsibilities are set.

The National Coordinator for Trinidad and Tobago also informed those present that the circumstances which have led to the sweeping changes in the political and economic landscapes with their concomitant demand on limited resources, and adverse impact on social progress must be

factored in the agreements reached at the Fifth Summit. He also pointed out that the region is markedly different to what it was in 1994 when the first Summit was held in Miami and that the need to work together has never been more urgent and relevant. Ambassador Rodriguez also stated that this situation has now made the need to arrive at consensus on actions that the region needs to take, and the renewal of the thrust toward greater implementation effectiveness, critical outputs of the Summit's multilateral process.

The Special Envoy for the Americas of Trinidad and Tobago, encouraged delegations to not lose sight of the fact that they have been given the responsibility to set the course for a more dynamic Americas in the global community and to create a strategic direction for all the member states to advance toward greater peace, security and prosperity. He opined that this could be achieved by placing a much needed focus on implementation and results. He reaffirmed that the National Secretariat of Trinidad and Tobago stood ready to work with all member states to ensure that the multilateral answer to the challenges of the region is successful. Ambassador Rodriguez indicated that the contributions from the delegations were very important to the process and that the National Secretariat was committed to finding and identifying common ground so that a people focused, action oriented and results driven agenda could be crafted for the Americas.

The complete text of Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez's remarks can be found at http://www.summit-americas.org/SIRG/SIRG_1108/remarks_lar.pdf

4. FIRST PLENARY SESSION

a) Overview of the methodology of the SIRG

In opening the First Plenary Session, the Chair reiterated the outline of the methodology proposed by the National Secretariat for the deliberations. He informed that in keeping with the proposed format he would begin by presenting for the consideration of delegations, paragraphs, 1-15 which will be read by the Director of the Summits Secretariat. He also instructed that where new text was being proposed this should be presented to the Secretariat and that sufficient time will be given for the proposals to be accurately reflected on the screen. He promised delegations that at the end of each day copies of the revised paragraphs would be distributed.

b) Negotiations on the draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain paragraphs 1-15

On presentation of the revised version of paragraphs 1-15 of the sub theme Human Prosperity, the member states requested the floor to present their proposed amendments for discussion. The results of the discussions are presented in (GRIC/O.4/doc.3/08)

5. SECOND PLENARY SESSION

- Negotiations on the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain paragraphs 1-15

The delegations continued their deliberations on paragraphs 1-15.

6. THIRD PLENARY SESSION

a) Remarks by the Executive Secretary of the Inter American Commission of Women (CIM)

The Chair introduced the Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission for Women, Ms. Carmen Lomellin and then gave her the floor. Ms Lomellin thanked the Chair on behalf of the newly elected President of the CIM, Minister Laura Albornoz of Chile, for the opportunity to share with the participants the recommendations of the third Meeting of Ministers or of the Highest Ranking Authorities Responsible for the Advancement of Women in the Member States. The Executive Secretary informed that since the Quebec Summit there has been a more visible presence of gender in the declarations and plans of actions of the Summits of the Americas. She also informed that it was also at the Quebec Summit that the inter American program on the promotion of women's human rights and gender equity and equality was endorsed as an effective tool for mainstreaming gender into the programs and policies of the Hemisphere. In presenting document CIM/REMEM-III/DOC.6/08 which contained the recommendations of the Ministers, Ms Lomellin relayed to the National Coordinators a message from the Ministers, who urged that a gender perspective be fully integrated into each of the themes of the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

The Executive Secretary also informed that the Ministers have committed to taking on a more active role in promoting gender equality within ministerial meetings and in creating strategic alliances with the National Coordinators of the summit Process with a view to integrating a gender perspective in the commitments which will be undertaken by the Heads of State in April 2009.

The Chair thanked Ms Lomellin for her presentation and opened the floor for comments by the delegations. The representatives of Chile, Canada, Honduras and Colombia expressed their appreciation to the Executive Secretary for her presentation of the recommendations of the Ministers responsible for the Advancement of Women and indicated that they would consider incorporating the text in the Declaration. In closing, the Chair reiterated the sentiments expressed by the delegations and assured Ms Lomellin that the SIRG would take into consideration the recommendations of the Ministers.

The complete text of Ms. Carmen Lomellin's remarks can be found at http://www.summit-americas.org/SIRG/SIRG_1108/remarks_cim.doc

b) Negotiations on the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain paragraphs 16-29

The Participants continued the deliberations on paragraphs 16-29. The Chair also established a working group to continue informal discussions on paragraphs 7, 13, and 16 and indicated that the results of that Working Group would be presented to the Plenary for its consideration. The Working Group was chaired by the alternate representative of Trinidad and Tobago.

7. FOURTH PLENARY SESSION

- Negotiations on the draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain paragraphs 16-29

The delegations continued their deliberations on paragraphs 16-29. At the end of the plenary session the Chair informed delegations that since the president of Bolivia would be addressing the Permanent Council at 10.00 a.m. on November 19, 2008, the plenary session for that day would begin at 1.00 p.m. However, he informed that the Working Group would continue its informal deliberations of the paragraphs assigned to it, at 9.30.a.m.

8. FIFTH PLENARY SESSION

- a) Negotiations on the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, Paragraphs 1-29.

The Plenary session began with the continuation of the deliberations on the draft Declaration paragraphs 1-29. This was completed with fifteen paragraphs approved, nine were presented to the working group for continued discussions and five, at the request of some countries, were placed on hold pending consultations (the full text and the status of the negotiated paragraphs are contained in document GRIC/DC-V/doc.1/08 rev.3)

The Chair requested permission from the delegations to modify the order of the agenda so that Argentina could make a presentation on the issue of the Malvinas Islands. Since there was no objection the Chair offered the floor to the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the Organization of American States, who drew the attention of the delegates to the draft communiqué presented to them. He informed that it was prepared on the basis of the text of the Declaration of the General Assembly of the OAS for 2008. He reminded delegations that a resolution on this issue has always been presented to the General Assembly and has always been approved. He gave a brief status report on the Malvinas ownership dispute between Argentina and Great Britain, and informed that the United Nations had requested that the countries continue their consultations with a view to arriving at a peaceful solution. He closed by calling upon the delegations to support the communiqué.

The Chair thanked the Permanent Representative of Argentina for the presentation of the document and proceeded to the closing session.

9. CLOSING SESSION

In closing the Chair thanked the participants and interpreters and summarized the results of the three day deliberations. He informed that the following paragraphs were approved: 1, 2, 4, 6, A, 9, 9bis, 10, 12, 17, 18, 19, C, 27, D, The Chair also informed that the paragraphs which were pending are 3, 4bis, 4ter, 5, 5bis, 7, B, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29.

Ambassador Rodriguez also proposed a four day meeting for the Sixth SIRG which was originally scheduled for December 10-12, 2008 in El Salvador. The Chair informed that this was necessary so that the work being done by the Working Group could be completed and for the commencement of the discussions on the paragraphs on Energy. He indicated that he would be speaking to the authorities in El Salvador and would confirm the dates for the Sixth SIRG by

November 24, 2008. He also reminded the delegations that the comments on Energy were also due by close of business on Monday, November 24, 2008.

In taking the floor a number of delegates (Peru, Mexico, Venezuela, Guatemala, Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Panama, Guyana on behalf of Caricom) expressed their support for the Communiqué presented by the Argentine Permanent Representative. The US representative indicated that although they recognize the de facto British management of the islands, however, in accordance with their policy of not taking a position on the issue, they will not support the Communiqué.

The Chair was also asked for the date on which the revised text on Energy would be distributed as well as the copy of the outcomes of the negotiations. He informed that these documents would be presented the following week. In closing, the Chair reiterated his appreciation for the work done by the delegations and the interpreters and assured delegates that they would be informed of the confirmed dates for the Sixth SIRG on Monday November 24, 2008.

The meeting was adjourned at 6.30 p.m.