



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP (SIRG)

MEETING AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL (2008)

June 2, 2008

*Centro de de Convenciones Plaza Mayor*  
Medellín, Republic of Colombia

OEA/Ser.E

GRIC/M.1/doc. 4/08

1 July 2008

Original: English

**Presentation by the OAS Summits of the Americas Secretariat on the ongoing implementation and follow-up of mandates of the Summits of the Americas Process**

Honorable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and Chair of the Ministerial SIRG

Honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegation

Secretary General Insulza, Assistant Secretary General Ramdin

Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, National Coordinator for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, and Special Envoy to the Americas of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago

Ambassadors, National Coordinators of the Summit Process, Distinguished Representatives of the JSWG, Delegates and guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Nearly fifteen years ago, at the First Summit of the Americas in Miami, the 34 democratically elected leaders of the Americas launched a broad and innovative multilateral initiative, based on shared principles and values, with a view to working together to achieve peace and prosperity in this Hemisphere. Since that time, leaders have met on five other occasions to engage in dialogue, striving for consensus regarding the main challenges faced by the Americas, and to establish a shared Hemispheric agenda.

Through the Summits of the Americas Process, the Heads of State and Government have adopted a series of mandates and commitments whose fulfillment requires a determined and sustained effort to address and resolve challenges, and to move towards the comprehensive, integral development of all our countries. The mandates and commitments of this Process have generated expectations and renewed hopes among the population for access to new opportunities to achieve a better future.

Our collective priorities are broad in essence, and topics are, indeed, numerous. It is essential, therefore, to revitalize this hemispheric process by focusing political will on the effective implementation of agreements adopted, doing so in a spirit of partnership and solidarity. This will require the strengthening of the established institutional framework, and the crafting of new

commitments capable of consolidating, in practical terms, the fundamental conditions for security, sustainable development and democratic governance.

It is important to highlight that 80 percent of the mandates of the Summits of the Americas are directly pertinent within the Inter-American ministerial system, which forms an integral part of the overall Summits process. As noted previously by Secretary General Insulza, this mechanism for sectoral policy dialogue affords a significant opportunity for consolidating and following up on Summits of the Americas' Declarations and Plans of Action. Inter-American Ministerials cover a wide range of sectors including, for example: labor, education, culture, sustainable development, science & technology, security, justice and social development. It is these Ministerial and related technical committee meetings which both reinforce political will, and facilitate the mobilization of required resources, for the implementation of the very mandates adopted and endorsed by our Presidents and Prime Ministers at the Summits.

The various sectoral meetings conduct their dialogues within the OAS framework and, therefore, in its role as Secretariat to these Ministerials, the OAS seeks to ensure that the outcomes are integrally related to the Summits' implementation and follow-up process. This is undertaken through facilitating policy dialogue and implementing specific programs, including technical assistance, institutional strengthening and capacity building initiatives which address the priorities identified.

It is both desirable and appropriate to reinforce awareness among the sectoral areas of this fundamental institutional relationship and its importance. The existence of a two-tiered process allows not only for the Summits of the Americas to issue mandates to the sectoral areas, but also for Ministerials to make recommendations to the Heads of State and Government, according particular relevance to the important linkages between and among these Inter-American fora.

On the division of the mandates into thematic areas the Inter-American Ministerial meetings play an important role as well. Throughout the Summits Process we observe that the articulation and comprehension of challenges confronting the Americas have not diminished but rather have evolved, as has the corresponding language of Summit Declarations and mandates. Nevertheless, the priority needs of the peoples of the Hemisphere remain constant, namely: reducing poverty and inequality, maintaining security, achieving social inclusion and cohesion, respecting diversity and striving for equity, as well as providing universal access to quality education and health care, among others.

Where we can see a variation over the course of previous Summits is how our leaders have approached these challenges. The composite result is more than eight hundred paragraphs which have been negotiated and endorsed in Summit Declarations and Plans of Action. These documents, and the mandates they affirm, aim to address an agenda of shared concerns, the response to which is of paramount importance in influencing national development plans, in determining the effective mobilization and allocation of national resources, in shaping international assistance efforts, and in the planning and implementation of institutional programs.

The vast majority of Summit mandates are clearly the responsibility, first and foremost, of Member States to address. Meeting these commitments requires visionary leadership, strategic public investment, and respectful engagement in a collective effort involving governments, civil society, the private sector and institutions. In particular, the twelve partner institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group (or JSWG), which is chaired by the OAS, collaborate in an integral

partnership in this overall effort, creating synergies in helping implement mandates and in providing technical and financial assistance to Member States. The *Regional Challenges* publication, which Ministers and Heads of Delegation have before them, presents a compilation of the JSWG institution's perspectives on the priorities for the hemispheric agenda as we prepare for the Fifth Summit. In addition, the work of these partner institutions regarding their assistance in the implementation of commitments made at the Fourth Summit, in Mar del Plata, are presented in a report included on the CD contained in your folders.

In the dialogue between civil society representatives and Heads of Delegations yesterday, a concern was expressed over evidence that the rate of implementation of Summit mandates is generally slow, as well as uneven across countries due to variable conditions from one country to another. In particular, a concern was expressed over evidence of limited involvement of civil society in developing and implementing public policy. Nevertheless, as I believe is amply evidenced by the richness and diversity of yesterday's dialogue, there is a genuine willingness and commitment reflected by both Governments and civil society organizations to intensify their engagement in a constructive and respectful dialogue, leading to effective collaboration. The challenges posed by those who intervened yesterday, and the responses from Heads of Delegations to the diversity of issues raised, is an energizing call to improve performance and accountability.

What is required is an intensified effort to renew commitments to collective actions, to identify and exchange best practices, and to share lessons learned in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of national and international actions in a spirit of genuine partnership. 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, Relevant, Measurable, Attainable 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.

In this way Governments can honor their commitments to their populations, by ensuring that mandates are people centered and results-driven, at the same time reaffirming the Summits Process as the cornerstone of development in our Hemisphere.

Have we made progress in the Americas since the First Summit? Absolutely, there can be no question. Have there been setbacks along the road? Inevitably, that is the very nature of development. Can we accelerate our implementation and follow-up to Summit commitments, and focus our preparations for the Fifth Summit with that objective in mind? We can and we must, in order to meet the expectation of all peoples of the Hemisphere, to secure a future of opportunity, prosperity, dignity, equity, justice, transparency, sustainable integral development, peace and democracy for present and future generations.

The Summits Secretariat of the OAS looks forward to continuing to work with all your Governments, and particularly in continuing our close collaboration with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, in support of a successful Fifth Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain.

Thank-you Madame Chair, and thank-you all for your kind attention.