

## 20. Follow Up to the Plan of Action

### → MANDATE

*At the third modern Summit in Quebec City, leaders recognized the primary role of governments in implementing the Plan of Action. They directed their respective Ministers to support the implementation of mandates and to report on progress. The Follow Up section to the Plan of Action addresses two critical components in the implementation of Summit mandates: Summit management, and implementation and financing.*

*In the area of **Summit management**, mandates include: the creation of a Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), a Steering Committee and an Executive Council; the OAS as technical secretariat to the Summit process; deepening partnerships and coordination between the Summit process and its partner institutions; engaging civil society, including business and the voluntary sector in support of Summit mandates.*

*In the area of **implementation and financing**, the mandates address the following: coordination in the inter-American system, including between the partner institutions and the SIRG; the participation of the heads of the partner institutions in the process; the ongoing financial support of initiatives by the partner institutions and multilateral development banks (MDBs); and the OAS Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities as the forum for civil society to contribute to the Summit process. In addition, the mandates address: the strengthening and reform of the OAS to support the Summit process as Technical Secretariat, and to provide support to ministerial and sectoral meetings, the creation of a specific fund to finance the activities of the SIRG, recommendations from the OAS to the SIRG on ways in which civil society can contribute to the monitoring and implementation of Summit mandates, and the further development of mechanisms to ensure the dissemination of information on the Summit process.*

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The Foreign Minister of Canada, Bill Graham, (right), presents an Inukshuk to the Foreign Minister of Argentina, Rafael Bielsa, in the hand over of the Chair of the Summit of the Americas Process, during the XXIX SIRG Meeting held on June 9, 2003, in Santiago, Chile.

#### SUMMIT MANAGEMENT

Canada became the Chair of the Summit process in November 1999, and hosted the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in 2001. As the next host of the Summit of the Americas, Argentina assumed the Chair of the process—and, by extension, of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG),—on June 9, 2003, in a ceremony during the Ministerial level meeting at the OAS General Assembly in Santiago, Chile. Mexico is chair of the preparations for the Special Summit of the

Americas that will be held January 12-13, 2004 in Monterrey, Mexico.

The Quebec City Plan of Action further institutionalized the management structure of the Summit process by strengthening the SIRG through the creation of an Executive Council (EC) and Steering Committee (SC).

Governments hold the primary role for implementing the Plan of Action, and the SIRG represents their collective responsibility in monitoring the implementation of

Summit mandates and in the preparation of future Summits. The SIRG is comprised of the 34 democratically-elected governments of the Hemisphere, which are represented in the SIRG by their Foreign Ministers and appointed Summit National Coordinators. The SIRG has met 11 times since Quebec City, with two of those meetings being held at the level of Foreign Ministers, to whom the Summit National Coordinators are responsible for annually reporting on the progress achieved in the fulfillment of the Plan of Action. The Ministers then review and assess the information at their annual meeting during the OAS General Assembly. In order to further increase the transparency and accountability of the Summit process, the SIRG instituted a system of National Reports. To date, over half the countries have submitted their national reports, outlining the concrete actions taken by the governments in the implementation of Summit mandates. These reports are also publicly available, reinforcing the leaders commitment to making the Summit process open to all. It was in this spirit that the SIRG held two open meetings with civil society—on April 2 and December 8, 2003—in order to discuss the progress-to-date in the Summit of the Americas process and the ways in which civil society may contribute to the implementation and monitoring of mandates.

The Executive Council of the SIRG was created as a regionally representative body, whose role is to assess, strengthen, and support the follow-up of Summit initiatives. The members of the Executive Council are Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Canada, Mexico, the United States, and a country designated on behalf of the Andean Community, CARICOM, Central America, and the Rio Group. The OAS, ECLAC, PAHO, IDB and the World Bank are also members of the Executive Council. They have met 10 times since Quebec City to assess, strengthen, and support the follow-up of Summit initiatives, as well as to deepen partnerships and coordination with the partner institutions.

The Steering Committee of the SIRG is comprised of past, current and future Summit hosts, and has met 10 times since Quebec City. The Steering Committee's role is to assist the Summit Chair in preparing for SIRG meetings, as well as the preparations for future Summits.

The SIRG, its Executive Council, and Steering Committee are currently concentrating their efforts in the negotiations and preparations for the Special Summit of the Americas, to be held January 12-13, 2004, in Monterrey, Mexico.

At the Quebec City Summit of the Americas, the Heads of State and Government recognized the central role that the OAS performs in support of the Summits of the Americas process, commending the Organization for its work as the Technical Secretariat and the institutional memory of the process. To formalize this role, the OAS Secretary General further strengthened the role of the OAS in the Summit process by creating the Summits of the Americas Secretariat. The Secretariat will continue to coordinate the implementation of Summit mandates in the OAS and provide support to: ministerial and sectoral meetings; the SIRG and its Executive Council and Steering Committee, as well as the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities; and in the preparations for future Summits of the Americas. The Secretariat also coordinates the activities of the Joint Summit Working Group of partner institutions, as described above. At the same time, it will continue in its critical role: coordinating the participation of civil society in the Summit process and in the OAS, and strengthening outreach efforts to the private sector, the media and society at large.

Coordination and dialogue in the inter-American system are central to the effective implementation of Summit mandates. In order to improve coordination, the Heads of the OAS, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and the

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United Nations Economic Commission of Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) signed a letter of agreement in July 2001 to create a mechanism, called the **Joint Summit Working Group**, for ongoing coordination among the institutions, and to facilitate their allocation of resources to implement Summit mandates.

Subsequently, the Joint Summit Working Group was expanded to include the World Bank, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) and the following sub-regional banks: the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and the Andean Development Corporation (CAF).

The Joint Summit Working Group, chaired by the OAS, meets periodically to address various issues and to facilitate the exchange of information on the members' respective activities related to the mandates of the Summits of the Americas. Several of these meetings have been dedicated to specific themes, such as civil society and connectivity. Moreover, the Joint Summit Working Group participates in meetings of

the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), delivering reports on activities undertaken by each institution in order to meet the Summit mandates. The Group published the *Official Documents from the Summits of the Americas Process from Miami to Quebec City*, which was presented to the General Assembly of the OAS in July 2002, together with the Group's regular annual Hemispheric Report.

In an effort to improve communication between the Summit National Coordinators and the Executive Directors of the IDB, the latter hosted a lunch for the members of the SIRG Steering Committee on May 28, 2003. Subjects discussed at the lunch included: the need to finance infrastructure, regional public goods, measures to reduce poverty and create employment, as well as social protection systems for the poor during economic crises and natural disasters. Also, an exchange took place regarding the need to replenish the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) as a way to attract private capital, develop physical infrastructure, and promote private sector competitiveness. It was considered quite important to engage finance ministers in the Summit process in order to seriously address the matter of funding Summit goals and to link the operations of the banks with those mandates. On December 10, 2003, the Heads of the partner institutions held a dinner with the 34 Summit National Coordinators and the Executive Directors of the IDB. The group agreed to intensify their coordination in the implementation of Summit mandates.

An area that would benefit from increased cooperation, and in which the institutions could provide technical assistance to the countries, is in methodological support for the preparation of national and regional reports on follow-up to the Summit mandates. To date, half the countries of the Hemisphere have not submitted their national reports on Summit implementation to the SIRG, and this poses a challenge that will need to be addressed collectively. Regarding the availability of information,

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*In October 2002, the first ever meeting was held between the Heads of the partner institutions, with the objective of evaluating the coordination work undertaken to implement the mandates of the Third Summit of the Americas. At this historic meeting, they decided to identify areas where they can work together, coordinate institutional support for ministerial meetings, divide responsibilities among their institutions, and more actively disseminate information on the Summits Process, its mandates, and the activities under way to carry out the Plan of Action.*

*The most recent report outlining the activities of this Joint Summit Working Group was delivered at the XXIX Meeting of the SIRG, held at the Ministerial level, during the General Assembly of the OAS in Santiago, Chile, in June 2003.*

governments face the challenge of gathering information on implementation from the full range of ministries and agencies. Many activities are being carried out, but information on specific endeavors is not always readily available. Furthermore, the institutions could support evaluation systems and effective monitoring in the countries, linking Summits of the Americas mandates to other processes and to global mandates from other Summits, such as the Millennium Summit, the Monterrey Summit on Financing for Development, and the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development.

#### SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION AND FINANCING

The complexities of implementing and providing adequate financing for 19 different thematic areas have tested the resolve of governments and hemispheric institutions alike. Fortunately, a number of activities have been undertaken to improve both the pace and coordination of implementation.

In response to the mandate to strengthen and reform the institutional mechanism and financial capacity of the OAS to support the Summit of the Americas process, the OAS created the SIRG Specific Fund in June 2001. Comprised of voluntary contributions from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, and the United States; as of November 2003, the fund has received a total of US\$ 298,649. These funds are used to support the diverse activities of the SIRG, its Executive Council and Steering Committee, and outreach activities conducted by the Summits of the Americas Secretariat.

Ministerial Meetings form a key part of the Summit process. Ministerial meetings on agriculture, trade, labor, culture, defense, education, and transportation—to name a few—as well as numerous high-level sectoral meetings, are the cornerstone for developing work plans to carry out the mandates assigned to them by the Heads of State and Government. These meetings also serve

to assist the SIRG in developing proposals and inputs during the preparatory phase leading up to a Summit. Since 2001, 27 Ministerial meetings have been held bringing together all Ministers of the Hemisphere in their respective areas of competence. The OAS, IDB, IICA, PAHO and ECLAC are the primary institutions that serve as Technical Secretariats to these Ministerials. The Heads of the institutions consider the ministerial meetings a fundamental component of the Summit process, as it is through them that the implementation of the Summit mandates takes place. Their work is a rich part of the Summit process that achieves concrete results.

In response to the Quebec City Summit mandate to consider ways in which civil society can contribute to the monitoring and implementation of Summit mandates, the OAS Summits of the Americas Secretariat presented to the XXVII meeting of the SIRG a proposal for contributions that could be made by civil society to the follow-up and implementation of Summit mandates. This proposal contained a strategy presented by different civil society groups as a result of a Workshop entitled "Evaluation of the Summit Process and Design of Follow-up Strategy of Implementation of the Quebec Action Plan," held in Buenos Aires on May 23 and 24, 2002, and organized by Corporación PARTICIPA in conjunction: with the Regional Coordinating Committee of Economic and Social Research (CRIES), the Department of Political Science of the University of Los Andes (UNIANDES) in Colombia, The Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) in Canada, and Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) from Chile.

The strategy outlines possible mechanisms for the implementation of Summit mandates in the following areas: strengthening of local governments, decentralization, freedom of opinion and expression, access to information, and reform of the judicial branch and access to justice. The strategy's three components are: preparation and

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*In addition, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat organized a Special Session of the OAS Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities, with the participation of more than 30 representatives from civil society. This meeting took place on March 28, 2003, at the OAS Headquarters and served as an opportunity for civil society organizations to express their views on a variety of Summit themes. The Corporación PARTICIPA presented an oral report on the progress of the civil society strategy in following up on the implementation of the Quebec City Plan of Action. A report on this meeting, including the views from civil society—was transmitted to the XXVIII Meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group, which took place on April 2, 2003, at OAS Headquarters. For the first time, the opening session of this SIRG meeting was open to civil society representatives.*

application of indicators on progress in the implementation of mandates, dissemination of the results to governments and civil society, and sharing the results with governments. Nineteen civil society organizations from 19 countries participated in this process. The first two components of the strategy have already been carried out, and the final stage is expected to be complete by July 2004. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provided a total of CDN\$ 370,000 in funding to support this project.

On September 24, 2003, the ESQUEL Foundation organized a working session through its Civil Society Task Force, called “An Update on the Summit Process.” The event—which included the participation of more than 25 civil society representatives—international organizations and invited special guests, was held at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Headquarters in Washington, DC. The objective of the session was to exchange ideas on the Summit of the Americas process and to

discuss the issues that will be on the table during the Special Summit of the Americas, to be held in Mexico on January 12th and 13th, 2004. Following this activity, the OAS Summit of the Americas Secretariat and the Inter-American Dialogue organized a briefing session on the upcoming Special Summit for civil society organizations in the Washington D.C. area. The Summit National Coordinators from Canada and the United States—as well as the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the OAS and the Executive Secretary of the Summit Secretariat—provided participants with an overview of the issues and current dynamic of the process.

The Summit of the Americas Secretariat organized—with the support of the Government of Mexico, and civil society networks—a regional forum entitled “Civil Society in the Process of Hemispheric Integration within the framework of the Special Summit of the Americas.” This forum took place on November 24-25, 2003, in Mexico City with the participation of 100 representatives from civil society organizations in the Hemisphere. The purpose of this gathering was to offer civil society organizations an opportunity to engage in a dialogue and formulate their contributions for the Special Summit of the Americas. Civil society produced a set of concrete recommendations for each of the three themes of the Special Summit, and these were presented to the XXXIII SIRG meeting on December 8, 2003.

While civil society is a focal point of many of the outreach activities of the OAS, various briefings have also been given to the private sector. Most recently, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat, in collaboration with the Council of the Americas, organized a briefing session during the VIII Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) Ministerial Meeting held in November in Miami. The United States Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Donald Evans, and the OAS Secretary General, César Gaviria gave a joint briefing on the FTAA in the context of the Summit of the Americas process to over 75 representatives from the private sector. Additionally, joint

activities have been organized with think tanks, such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Inter-American Dialogue. A regional seminar on the Summit process and the Special Summit of the Americas was held on December 12, 2003, to brief regional press agencies as well as government media-relations officials. These outreach activities serve to engage and build partnerships with the diverse stakeholders in the Summit process.

### CHALLENGES

In order to obtain a higher degree of success and buy-in to be achieved in Summit follow-up, countries have suggested that the Ministers of Finance need to increase their engagement in support of the overall Summit agenda, both with respect to their position as Finance Ministers, and as Governors of the multilateral development banks. The institutions have played, and will continue to play, a key role in helping the countries to further identify possible internal and external sources of financial and technical resources for Summit initiatives. The mobilization of resources poses an ongoing challenge to the process. Closely related to the issue of national governments increasing the involvement of their sectoral ministries is the augmented integration of the Ministerial meetings into the Summit of the Americas process. A higher level of coordination with the Ministerial meetings is a goal that the SIRG continues to perfect. Summit management of a process involving thirty-four countries and a broad policy agenda is a difficult task. The lack of resources for countries to fully monitor and implement Summit mandates, the varying agendas of the inter-American institutions,

### MINISTERIAL MEETINGS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS PROCESS 2001-2003

- Ministers of Foreign Affairs  
*June 2001, June 2002, June 2003, October 2003 (Special Conference on Security)*
- Ministers and High-Level Authorities of the Hemisphere Responsible for Policies on Decentralization  
*July 2001, October 2002, September 2003*
- Ministers of Justice and Attorneys General of the Americas  
*March 2002*
- Defense Ministers of the Americas  
*November 2002*
- Ministers of Transportation  
*March 2001, May 2003*
- Finance Ministers of the Hemisphere  
*March 2001*
- Trade Ministers  
*April 2001, October 2002, November 2003*
- Ministers of Energy  
*March 2001*
- Environment Ministers  
*March 2001*
- Ministers of Agriculture and Rural Life  
*November 2001, November 2003*
- Minister of Health and Agriculture  
*April 2003*
- Ministers of Labor  
*October 2001, September 2003*
- Ministers of Education  
*September 2001, August 2003*
- Health Ministers  
*September 2001, September 2002, September 2003*
- Health and Environment Ministers  
*March 2002*
- Ministers of Culture  
*July 2002*

and the limited personnel and budget of the Summit of the Americas Secretariat, is a serious challenge to meeting the aspirations of Summit leaders. Outreach activities to society at large need to be expanded to ensure the transparency and the ownership of the Summits of the Americas process to all the citizens of the Americas.