



# ***Summits of the Americas: Highlights***

Summits of the Americas Secretariat  
Organization of American States  
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## **Summits of the Americas: Highlights**

The Summit of the Americas brings together Heads of State and Government in the Western Hemisphere to discuss and act on political, economic and social issues of common concern. The original concept of the Summit of the Americas was to establish a framework of shared values and common commitments to achieve peace and prosperity in the hemisphere. This framework was to be supported by a mechanism to ensure action on these commitments. The idea blossomed when hemispheric leaders, representing thirty-four democratically elected governments, came to the First Summit of the Americas in Miami in December 1994 to discuss and approve a detailed plan of political, economic and social initiatives. They sought to combine forces to meet the recognized challenges of building a modern state in a global economy to fulfill the needs and aspirations of the 800 million citizens of the Americas.

This bold beginning jump started a process of hemispheric cooperation that continues today. Through the 1996 Special Summit on Sustainable Development in Bolivia, the Second Summit of the Americas held in Santiago, Chile in 1998, and

most recently, the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, Canada in April 2001, leaders reinforced their commitment to address critical issues affecting the Hemisphere. They established concrete goals and strengthened the architecture for common action and accountability in the implementation of these goals.

We are now at a mid-point between the 2001 Third Summit and the Fourth Summit of the Americas scheduled for 2005 in Argentina. Leaders are laying the groundwork for a Special Summit of the Americas to be held in Mexico to engage the recently elected national leaders in the on-going Summit agenda and to constructively confront difficult economic and social challenges in the region.

This is a time to take stock of and evaluate our accomplishments in our periodic Summit meetings and mechanisms put in place to further Summit goals. A first step is to put this Summit initiative within the context of recent hemispheric developments. For example, in the political arena several countries in the Hemisphere only recently emerged from military rule and established elected governments. Government institutions including



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*This is a special edition of the Summit of the Americas Bulletin. Our Secretariat offers this brief report on key Summit accomplishments on the occasion of the meeting of the XXIX Summit Implementation Review Group, the XXXIII OAS General Assembly, the passing of the Chairmanship of the Summit process from Canada to Argentina and the preparation of the Special Summit in Mexico. The Bulletin presents some of the history of the Summit of the Americas since its inception in 1994, selected major accomplishments since the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in April 2001, and updated information on the institutional structure of the Summit process. For more detailed information on Summit-related activities, please see our web site, [www.summits-americas.org](http://www.summits-americas.org), which includes archives of Summit documents and is updated weekly.*

*We hope you find this Bulletin useful in understanding and appreciating the enormous work and success of hemispheric leaders in tackling the region's most difficult problems through cooperative efforts. This sharing of values and commitment is the spirit of the Summit of the Americas.*

***Dr. Irene Klinger***

judiciaries and legislatures are under reform in virtually all countries in the Americas, driven by the needs of a modern regulatory state and by the democratic demands of empowered citizenries. Human rights violations, violent threats to personal security and the dangers stemming from the use of and trade of illegal narcotics are broadly recognized as impediments to progress and as persistent problems demanding political solutions at the highest levels of government. In the economic realm, use of new technologies and further integration of the countries of the Hemisphere into rapidly evolving international markets for goods, services and capital is a recognized trend in the region. Policy analysts, Central Bank officials, tax and economic development authorities, and trade negotiators are among those seeking solutions to reduce the region's high levels of poverty and unemployment through access to international markets. On the social front, the demands of citizens for better access to quality health care, good education and reliable social safety nets are increasing and influencing political debates on allocation of national resources and international development assistance. Each of these political, economic and social trends is part of the hemispheric landscape.

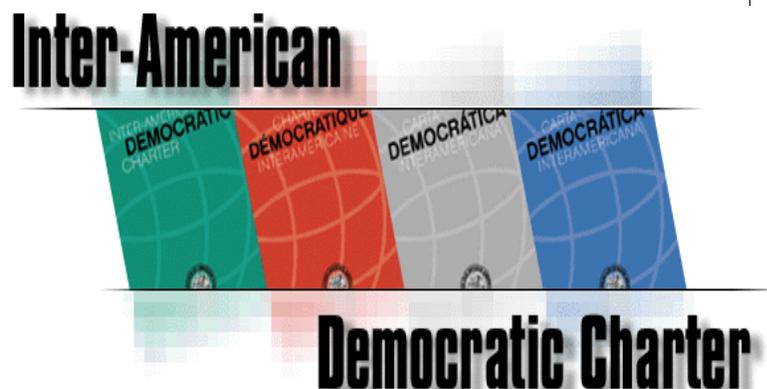
What role have the Summit of the Americas and the third meeting of leaders in Quebec City played within this landscape? Have they made a positive contribution to the attainment of common goals? What results have we seen from this exercise of reaching consensus on a common agenda at the highest political level in the Americas?

**Political  
Agenda of  
the Americas**

A direct result of the countries' commitment to collective action was the directive by Heads of State and Government at the Quebec City Third Summit of the Americas, through their Foreign Ministers, to prepare an Inter-American Democratic Charter. In so doing, they reinforced OAS instruments for the active defense of representative democracy. This decision was engendered by a broad consensus that the most

constructive way to defend democracy is to identify early signs of political problems and to work collectively, and with extensive consultations, to avoid breakdowns in democratic practices.

The remarkable next step was the negotiation and signing of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Under the auspices of the OAS, governments, with active input from civil society organizations, drafted a declaration that included a renewed commitment to strengthening democratic institutions, identifying specific signposts of democracies under stress, establishing procedures for calling attention to potential breakdowns of democratic rule and defending fragile democracies through collective action. Ministers met in Lima, Peru in September 2001 to discuss the draft Charter. This was less than six months after the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City. On the morning of September 11, 2001 Foreign Ministers gathered in Lima to debate the provisions of the Draft Charter. US Secretary of State Colin Powell received the news of the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, DC. Instead of leaving the meeting immediately because of this horrific act against his country, Secretary Powell returned to the conference of hemispheric Foreign Ministers. The Ministers first expressed their sympathy with the people of the United States and then unanimously approved the Democratic Charter. The Inter-American Democratic Charter is the most complete common agreement on the collective defense of democracy in the world today. To help bring this agreement to life, the OAS distributed over 60,000 pocket-sized copies of the Charter in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese to



*The Inter-American Democratic Charter sets out a simple, clear declaration: “The people of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it.” In 28 articles, this landmark document—adopted on September 11, 2001—defines the elements of democracy and specifies how it should be defended when it is under threat.*

- Inter-American Democratic Charter

*“In this way we take a bold step to defend the right of our people to look for their destiny through the democratic ways; to face the threats and challenges to democracy with a collective action that is clear, timely, and by consensus.”*

- César Gaviria, Secretary General, OAS, Lima, Peru, September 10, 2001



government officials and citizen groups throughout the region.

The Inter-American Democratic Charter was invoked after the April 2002 events in Venezuela, and a consultative mechanism between the opposition and the government was established. The OAS is strengthening its capacity to apply all elements of the Inter-American Democratic Charter to defend and protect democracy in the Americas. This Charter, and its subsequent acceptance and application, is an important product of the Summit of the Americas framework for cooperation in the Hemisphere.

A continuing dilemma for the success of democratic rule in the Americas is the problem of corruption. The confidence of citizens in their government can be undermined by a lack of transparency and/or a lack of reliable ways to uncover and eliminate corrupt practices in the public and private sectors. From the beginning of the Summit process, the value of international cooperation to address this issue was recognized by hemispheric leaders. As a direct result of commitments made at the First Summit of the Americas, the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption was adopted in Venezuela in March 1996. The Convention requires parties to: (1) criminalize the bribery of foreign officials; (2) update domestic legislation to criminalize corrupt acts such as bribery; (3) assist one another in criminal investigations and prosecutions related to such acts; and (4) explicitly disallow the use of “bank secrecy” as a basis for denying assistance in criminal investigations. To date, twenty-eight countries in the Hemisphere have ratified this important juridical instrument.

The Inter-American Convention Against

Corruption is a good example of positive results from applying political will at the highest level, taking action at the ministerial level to produce a consensus document and installation of a follow-up procedure which is reaffirmed by hemispheric leaders. Two months after leaders at the III Summit of the Americas called for the establishment of a follow-up mechanism for the Anti-Corruption Convention, the OAS established such a mechanism. Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay, have volunteered to be the first countries to be evaluated by the methodology established at the OAS experts meeting.

Two other important hemispheric agreements (The Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism and the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism - MEM) depict the inter-American process of: (1) recognizing a problem in the region requiring collective action, (2) mobilizing political will at the highest level at Summit meetings and in Summit documents, (3) producing written hemispheric agreements and (4) implementing these agreements with the assistance of national governments and inter-American institutions.

The first agreement is the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism. At the Second Summit of the Americas in Santiago in 1998, Heads of State and Government called for increased efforts to prevent, combat and eliminate terrorism. Governments responded by convening specialized meetings among experts on terrorism, preparing a detailed plan reflected in the 1998 Commitment of Mar del Plata and establishing an Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism, known by its Spanish acronym CICTE. Even before the September 11, 2001 attacks, leaders at

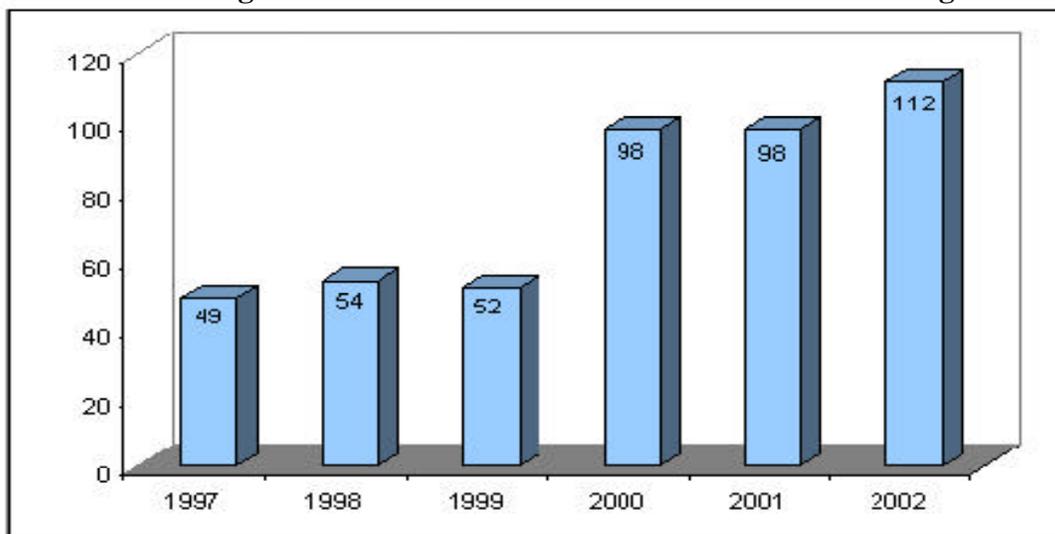
the Third Summit of the Americas highlighted the need to fight terrorism as a key part of a hemispheric strategy to address security issues in the region including border conflicts, the illegal arms trade and the elimination of anti-personnel mines. Immediately following the attacks on the US, Foreign Ministers held an emergency meeting and laid the groundwork for their approval of an Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism at the June 2002 OAS General Assembly in Barbados. The Convention, signed by thirty-three countries, includes provisions to combat financing of terrorist activities through information sharing, cooperative measures for border controls and establishment of mechanisms to track and stop all elements of terrorist networks. As in the case of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, a process of collaborative implementation of the detailed commitments of the Terrorism Convention was instituted at the OAS. This allowed them to tap into national expertise and facilitate the exchange of experiences and upgrading of national capacities to respond to the complex threats of domestic and international terrorism.

The second prominent example of a successful integrated process of hemispheric cooperation fueled by Summit leadership is the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, known by its Spanish acronym CICAD. Here

again, a recognized problem requiring collective action was brought into the Summit process. Government leaders supported a specific plan of action and a mechanism addressing the problem was put in place. National leaders embraced the concept that the hemispheric drug problem includes human, social and economic costs that go beyond simple interdiction at the border. They designated the OAS as the appropriate multilateral institution to manage the political and technical aspects of fighting the illegal drug trade. Through national consultations and the use of experts in the field, the CICAD's Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism has succeeded in identifying and financing vital national needs such as programs to reduce the demand for illegal drugs and methods for tracking and capturing criminal drug traders.

Finally, within the political realm, violation of human rights are a long-standing problem in the Americas. Although the massive and systematic human rights abuses of the past are over in the majority of the hemisphere, we are now facing new challenges that require a continued commitment to protect human rights in the region. The Third Summit of the Americas Action Plan reiterates the need to strengthen government institutions such as domestic courts and to extend outreach to vulnerable groups. Leaders supported a system of international rapporteurs to monitor and report progress in the protection of human rights and the work of the

**Total number of hearings of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights held by year**



Source: OAS

Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The political backing of the Inter-American Court and the Commission has played a key role in maintaining a truly independent and well-functioning system that is easily accessible to those groups or individuals most in need of human rights protection. A demonstration of the success of this system is its capacity to elicit and respond to cases through holding hearings. As noted in the chart above, the value of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights is shown in the increase in the number of hearings held in the last three years, resulting in friendly settlements among states and petitioners, and in the redress of injustices.

**Economic  
Agenda of the  
Americas**

Prosperity based on economic opportunity and growth is a goal of all thirty-four countries participating in the Summits of the Americas as recognized in their commitment to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty by fifty percent by the year 2015. High levels of poverty and extreme poverty are still prevalent in the Americas with all of its consequences of poor health, poor education and lack of opportunity for individuals to benefit from their own endeavors. As it is widely recognized, almost all economic activity in the modern world is tied in some way to the international trading system. Governments borrow on international capital markets to fund public programs, businesses buy and sell products from abroad, and people travel overseas to work and learn. International cooperation for economic prosperity is as old as the first trades between the Mayans and the Incas. In the Summit process, the main economic cooperation keystone is the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

Hemispheric leaders proved the importance of collective decision-making in 1994 when launching the negotiations to achieve a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreement by the year 2005. The negotiations are underway and the FTAA process continues to receive political and financial support at and in between each

Summit as countries pursue and refine the goal of a common set of trading rules and trade without barriers in the Americas. At the Third Summit of the Americas, leaders reaffirmed the 2005 deadline for the negotiations and called for more transparency in the FTAA talks. Trade Ministers responded by publishing the draft of the FTAA agreement under discussion and holding outreach sessions with civil society groups. Even under significant criticism from some quarters, the FTAA negotiators continue their work in this context of high-level political will. The on-going FTAA negotiations represent the most prominent economic mandate of the Summit of the Americas.

The FTAA negotiations are supported by an innovative and successful arrangement among inter-American agencies. The OAS, Inter-American Development Bank and UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean work together to provide negotiators with an administrative secretariat, studies on request, compendia of national and international laws and treaties, training and public and secure websites. This institutional contribution and division of labor, has provided continuity and a valuable resource to the FTAA negotiations since they began in 1994. This is a good example of the mobilization of existing institutions within our family of hemispheric agencies to support the accomplishment of Summit goals.

Complementary economic goals of the Summit process are achieving growth with equity through enabling the success of private sector activities and addressing the gaps in needed physical infrastructure, including in the key areas of telecommunications and Internet connectivity. As mechanisms for cooperation and sharing of information were strengthened throughout the Summit process, agriculture productivity has increased and the damage from natural disasters has been reduced.

**Social Agenda  
of the  
Americas**

The social agenda of the hemisphere is traditionally defined as activities to promote better health,

education and generally improve the quality of life of our citizens. There are, of course, no hard and fast lines between the political, economic and social areas within the Summit of the Americas process. Political choices influence the social services that are available. Economic success or failure of nations determines the political fate of leaders. The social agendas of nations change over time to respond to new threats such as illegal narcotics and terrorism. Summit leaders recognized the interrelated nature of political, economic and social issues by, in some manner, including elements of each in all areas of the Summit Plans of Action to realistically address the challenges of public policy design and execution.

Providing quality, universal education is a goal of each of the nations of the Hemisphere. Summit leaders supported this goal by identifying ways for educators to reach under-served populations, to better share information on teaching methods and to mobilize financing to improve education services. Education Ministers used the Summit mandates to bring new energy to their meetings, including preparing a detailed education plan of action. In this context, countries reached agreement with bilateral and multilateral funders to increase activities including teacher training, building and maintaining schools in rural areas, instituting projects for education of girls, and taking advantage of new technologies for lifelong and distance learning.

The OAS provides secretariat support to the meetings of Education Ministers at the hemispheric level. The OAS General Secretariat offers this type of support to Culture Ministers and Labor Ministers, as well as their comprehensive support to Foreign Ministers. The Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) provides support for meetings of Health Ministers and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation Agriculture (IICA) for Ministers of Agriculture. These ministerial meetings gather experts in

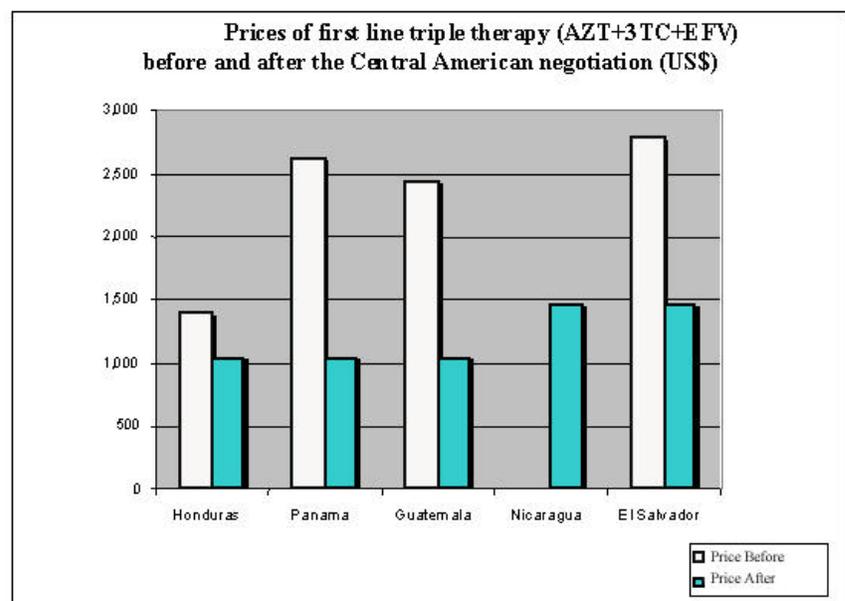
each of the Summit's issue areas to evaluate progress and implement stated goals. The Ministerial actions along with work of the national governments and specialized international agencies active in the Americas, constitutes the operational level of the Summit process.

Two good examples within the social agenda of the positive impact of the Quebec Plan of Action and follow-up are the fight against HIV/AIDS and the recognition of the increasing role of women in leadership positions in public office. At the Third Summit of the Americas leaders gave such high importance to HIV/AIDS that they included a separate paragraph in their political declaration:

*“We acknowledge that another major threat to the security of our people is HIV/AIDS. We are united in our resolve to adopt multi-sectoral strategies and to develop our cooperation to combat this disease and its consequences”* (Third Summit of the Americas Declaration of Quebec City).

In the Quebec City Plan of Action, one of the specific goals is to encourage the availability of affordable antiretrovirals to treat patients with the HIV/AIDS. In the case of the Central American countries, this helped mobilize governments

### Reduction of antiretroviral prices in Central America



Source: PAHO

to negotiate successfully with major pharmaceutical companies to reduce the price of antiretrovirals by an average of fifty five percent.

The effectiveness of the Pan-American Health Organization benefited from Summit leadership and political support to gain even higher visibility for its work in health sector reform, bringing new approaches to bear in improving health services and actively engaging in discussions of the health dimensions of other sector's policies, such as agriculture and the environment. The importance of cooperative initiatives in health among countries is particularly evident today as globalization adds to the potential for the rapid spread of disease (SARS is our latest example) and as new approaches are developed to tackle old issues such as access to health care by the poor.

Progressive elements of the social agenda were lifted to prominence by Summit leaders at their meeting in Quebec City. Addressing gender equality, leaders called for the promotion of women's full and equal participation in political life in their countries and in decision-making at all levels. The Summit commitment encourages women to pursue careers in government and government decision-makers to offer important public policy positions to women. The status of women in political life in the Americas is reflected in the following two tables.

It is noteworthy that women are reaching higher percentages of positions of responsibility in government but are still quite under represented at the highest levels. The

*Gender Empowerment Measure...*

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Female legislators, senior officials and managers (as % of total)*</b>	<b>Countries</b>	<b>Number of Women Leaders in the Hemisphere (as of April, 15, 2003)**</b>
<b>United States</b>	45	<b>Panama</b>	1 President & 4 Ministers
<b>Trinidad and Tobago</b>	42	<b>Costa Rica</b>	1 Vice President & 6 Ministers
<b>Barbados</b>	40	<b>Dominican Republic</b>	1 Vice President & 4 Ministers
<b>Colombia</b>	38	<b>Canada</b>	10 Ministers
<b>Belize</b>	37	<b>Colombia</b>	6 Ministers
<b>Bolivia</b>	36	<b>Haiti</b>	5 Ministers
<b>Honduras</b>	36	<b>Bahamas</b>	4 Ministers
<b>Uruguay</b>	36	<b>Barbados</b>	4 Ministers
<b>Canada</b>	35	<b>Brasil</b>	4 Ministers
<b>Costa Rica</b>	33	<b>Ecuador</b>	4 Ministers
<b>El Salvador</b>	33	<b>Guyana</b>	4 Ministers
<b>Panama</b>	33	<b>Trinidad &amp;</b>	4 Ministers
<b>Bahamas</b>	31	<b>United States</b>	4 Ministers
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	31	<b>Venezuela</b>	4 Ministers
<b>Ecuador</b>	28	<b>Argentina</b>	3 Ministers
<b>Suriname</b>	28	<b>Chile</b>	3 Ministers
<b>Peru</b>	28	<b>Grenada</b>	3 Ministers
<b>Chile</b>	26	<b>Guatemala</b>	3 Ministers
<b>Mexico</b>	24	<b>Honduras</b>	3 Ministers
<b>Venezuela</b>	24	<b>Jamaica</b>	3 Ministers
<b>Paraguay</b>	23	<b>Suriname</b>	3 Ministers
		<b>Mexico</b>	2 Ministers
		<b>Paraguay</b>	2 Ministers
		<b>Saint Lucia</b>	2 Ministers
		<b>Saint Vincent &amp; the Grenadines</b>	2 Ministers
		<b>Belize</b>	1 Minister
		<b>Bolivia</b>	1 Minister
		<b>El Salvador</b>	1 Minister
		<b>Nicaragua</b>	1 Minister
		<b>Peru</b>	1 Minister
		<b>St. Kitts and Nevis</b>	1 Minister

\* UNDP Human Development

\*\* OAS CIM 2003

Summit process as it is, with detailed plans of action and follow-up mechanisms, is well suited to incorporate elements of social change into hemispheric dialogue. Gender issues have been given serious consideration through the leaders' commitments and the energetic work of official groups like the OAS's Inter-American Commission on Women and specialized offices within inter-American agencies. In addition, countries are preparing an American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and are working to address discrimination against persons with disabilities.

### Organizing the Americas

Considerable attention in the Summit process is given to how to best organize the architecture of governments, ministries, inter-American institutions and civil society organizations to keep the hemispheric agenda up-to-date and to make it a reality. The Summit structure has evolved since the first Summit in 1994. Heads of State and Government are the final decision makers for any Summit initiative. The Declarations and Plans of Action of each Summit have the political weight of being approved by the thirty-four democratically elected leaders. Foreign Ministers have the primary role, as the senior ministers in charge, of the preparation of a Summit and overseeing follow-up to Summit mandates. Each Foreign Minister has designated a National Summit Coordinator to serve on the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), the hemispheric body responsible for monitoring implementation of Summit of the Americas mandates and preparing for the next Summit. The directing bodies of the SIRG are the Steering Committee consisting of past and future Summit host countries and the Executive Council of the SIRG, consisting of the Steering Committee members plus Brazil, Mexico and regional representatives from CARICOM, the Andean Community, Central America and the Rio Group. The members of the Executive Council support follow-up to Summit initiatives and facilitate the decision-making of the full SIRG.

*The Secretariat for the Summit Process shall be the principal entity within the General Secretariat charged with the responsibility of supporting the Summit follow-up mechanisms established in the Quebec City Plan of Action and of those that are approved in future Summits; it shall coordinate the implementation of the mandates entrusted to the OAS General Secretariat; and shall be responsible for the Summit of the Americas Information Network.*

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Implementation of the goals of the Summit receives significant assistance from the inter-American institutions. These institutions include both multilateral development banks and specialized inter-American agencies, and they have joined forces to form the Joint Summit Working Group. This group is chaired by the Summit of the Americas Secretariat of the OAS and has proven effective in mobilizing the commitment of and substantive assistance from all partners to achieve Summit mandates. One concern of the early Summit architects was to avoid setting up new institutions that would duplicate the efforts of existing organizations. The Joint Summit Working Group embodies this spirit and plans to make an even stronger contribution to successful Summit implementation in the future.



***“We underscore the need for ongoing dialogue and coordination in the inter-American system to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of Summit mandates. We welcome the engagement of the institutional partners (OAS, PAHO, IICA, IDB, ECLAC, and the World Bank) in all stages of the Summit of the Americas process...”***

*- Third Summit of the Americas Plan of Action*

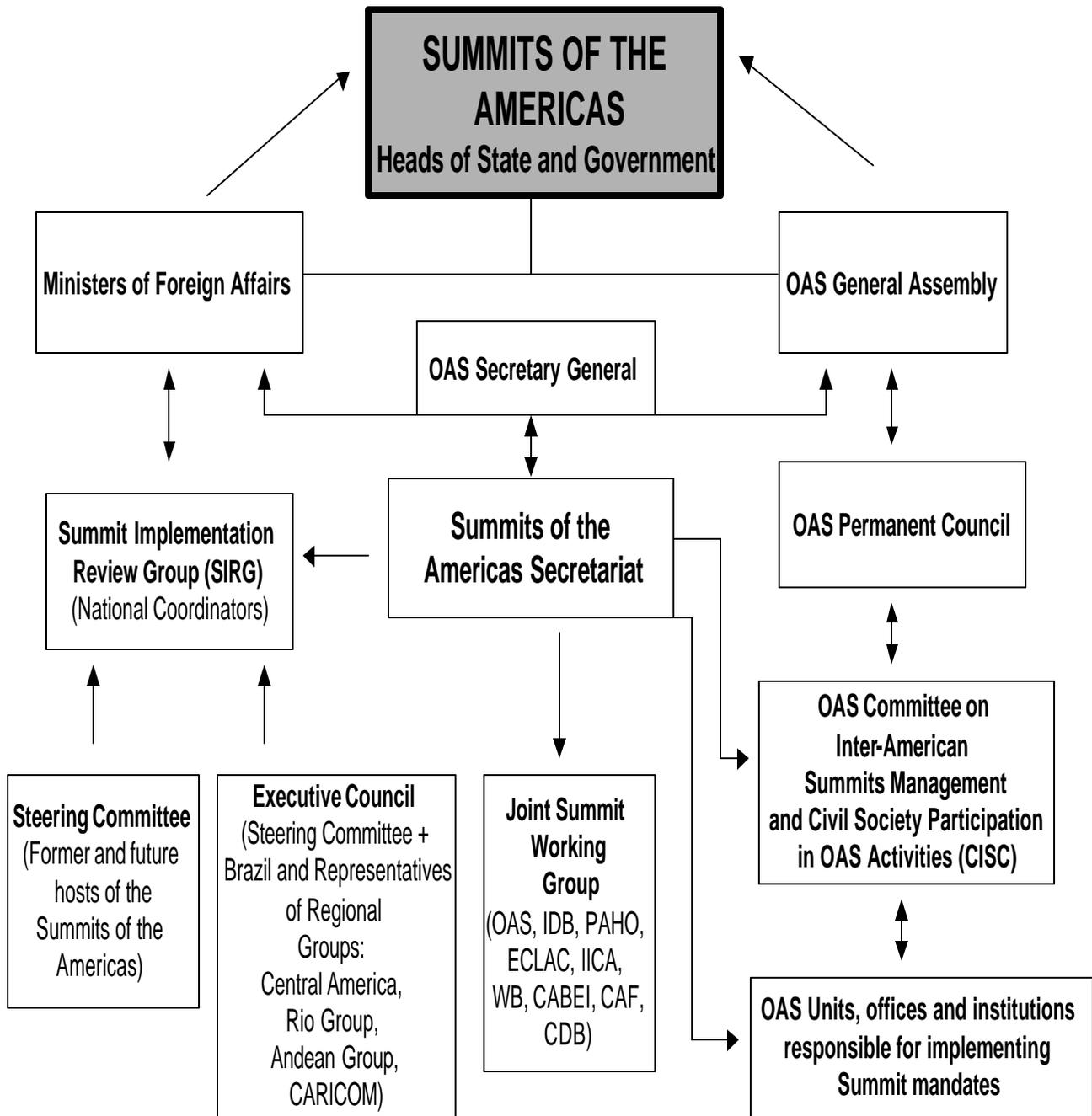


Finally, a relatively new player on the stage of multilateral, intergovernmental initiatives is civil society. Here again, the Summit of the Americas took the bold step of including civil society consultations in its goals from the beginning of the process. Consultations began in Miami and have evolved to the point where representatives of civil society organizations are invited to participate in SIRG meetings, are asked for their recommendations on how to best monitor and implement Summit mandates and are consulted on new mechanisms for civil society participation in the overall Summit architecture. This initiative has not been without controversy as civil society organizations are sometimes critical of governments and governments sometimes question the legitimacy of civil society representation. However, the experience to date with increased involvement of civil society organizations has added strength, creativity, richness and energy to Summit deliberations.

**What’s Next?**

Once again, leaders in the Americas have recognized that collective deliberation is a valuable mechanism for confronting difficult circumstances in the hemisphere. Political fragility, slow economic growth and unmet social demands are high on the agenda of the Americas. About half of the leaders of our countries were elected since the April 2001 Third Summit of the Americas and have not personally participated in a hemispheric Summit. Thirty-four countries expressed their belief in the maintenance of the Summit process by proposing a Special Summit of the Americas to be held in Mexico before the end of the year. This Special Summit will mark the path to our planned Fourth Summit of the Americas to be chaired and hosted by Argentina in 2005. Hopes are high that the Special Summit and the Fourth Summit of the Americas will provide the needed leadership to keep, and perhaps accelerate, action in meeting the ambitious goals embedded in our Summit of the Americas process.

## MECHANISMS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY & FOLLOW UP



### Disclaimer

This report was prepared by the Summits of the Americas Secretariat and does not necessarily represent the views of the Member States of the Organization of American States.



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