



**XLI Meeting of the Summit  
Implementation Review Group (SIRG)  
February 28 and 29, 2008  
Tobago, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

**MINUTES OF THE XLI MEETING OF THE SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION  
REVIEW GROUP (SIRG)\***

**February 28, 2008**

The XLI Meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) was held on February 28 and 29, 2008, in Tobago, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, with the aim of sharing the views and perspectives of the countries which form part of the Summits of the Americas Process on the key issues contained in the Preliminary Concept Paper for the Fifth Summit of the Americas “Securing Our Citizens Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability”.

**Opening and Welcome**

The meeting was chaired by Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodríguez, National Coordinator and Special Envoy to the Americas and Chair of the Fifth Summit. Participating in the meeting were the National Summit Coordinators, the Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Ambassador Albert R. Ramdin, as well as the representatives of the JSWG institutions and the CARICOM Secretariat.

The Chairman welcomed the participants and underlined the importance of these SIRG meetings as part of the preparatory meetings towards the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

In his remarks, Ambassador Rodriguez made reference to the meeting with members of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) institutions and CARICOM Secretariat on January 24, 2008, at which the institutions shared their points of view on the regional challenges.

After his opening remarks, the Chair invited the Assistant Secretary General of the OAS to address the participants. Ambassador Ramdin noted the progress that had been made in the region since the inception of the Summit Process in 1994, which has changed the dynamic of hemispheric relations and strengthened democratic institutions in the Americas.

The OAS Assistant Secretary General recognised the importance of consultations at all levels in preparation for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, and took the opportunity to announce the appointment of Mr. David Morris as Director of the Summits of the Americas Secretariat in the OAS General Secretariat and

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\* Prepared and translated by the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Dr. Riyad Insanally as the new Representative of the OAS Secretariat in Port of Spain, as of April 1, 2008.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, was unable to address the SIRG as planned during this session. The Honourable Minister delivered her remarks on the second day of the meeting.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Following the Opening Session, the countries approved the agenda without amendment.

### **Presentation on the Rationale of the Concept Paper and Theme for the Fifth Summit of the Americas by the Chair of the Fifth Summit of the Americas**

The Chair of the SIRG made a presentation on the most important challenges of the region, which were taken into consideration by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in the preparation of the Preliminary Concept Paper.

In outlining the three pillars of the paper, Ambassador Rodriguez underscored the need to address them in an inter-connected manner, based on the principles of good governance, democracy and respect for human rights. He also expressed the importance of linking each goal to institutional strengthening.

The Chair of the SIRG then introduced the Thematic Coordinator of the National Secretariat, Professor Anthony Clayton, and invited him to make a presentation on the three pillars of the Concept Paper, to be followed by a dialogue with the representatives of the participating countries.

### **Presentation and Dialogue on thematic area: Human prosperity**

The Thematic Coordinator delivered a presentation on the issues related to human prosperity, and underlined that the concept integrated various elements that were important to human well-being. The focus adopted in the Preliminary Concept Paper is on the promotion of democracy, good governance and respect for human rights; economic development and growth; good education and decent employment; reducing poverty, inequality and crime; ensuring food security and adequate nutrition; improving health status; and environmental quality. Following this presentation, the Delegations engaged in an exchange of ideas on this thematic area.

The Delegation of Canada reiterated their commitment to the Summit Process and highlighted the importance of Countries' ensuring the implementation of past mandates. They announced the presentation of their 2007 National Report and welcomed the Implementation Report submitted by the JSWG. The Delegation also stressed the need to focus on actions undertaken to address challenges, being guided by the central goals of democratic governance, prosperity and security.

The Representative of Canada expressed that democratic governance was the basis for progress in all other areas and that security should be approached from a multidimensional perspective, including the prevention of social violence, the creation of economic opportunities for youth to combat exclusion and marginalisation, the promotion of a democratic culture and the empowerment of the disenfranchised.

The Delegation of Chile supported the issues contained in the preliminary Concept Paper and mentioned good governance, peace and security, democracy and human rights as contributing factors to human prosperity, which in itself was based on the concept of human development.

The Delegation of the United States of America welcomed the theme and reiterated its commitment to the Summit Process. The Delegation supported the focus on environmental sustainability and energy security, and stated that good governance continues to be key for progress in the region, and OAS Member States must remain committed to the Inter-American Democratic Charter. The Representative of the United States noted that improving implementation, as a core principle of the Paper, was important to keeping countries engaged in the Process and making the Summit relevant. Regarding the issue of economic competitiveness, the Delegation highlighted the upcoming Second Annual Americas Competitiveness Forum (ACF), which will be held on August 17-19, 2008, in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

The Delegation of Argentina underlined the quality of the Paper and commented on the organisation of the document and its methodology, suggesting that the use of language should be consistent with that employed in past OAS documents. The Representative of Argentina stressed the need to address the issue of inequality.

The Delegation of Colombia highlighted that the treatment of the issue of human prosperity was a novel approach. The Representative of Colombia noted that the issue of crime should not be dealt with exclusively in relation to poverty, but rather from a multidimensional view of security that includes the global problem of drugs, transnational organised crime, terrorism and arms trafficking, among others. The Delegation underlined the role of the youth, particularly since the upcoming Hemispheric Forum with Civil Society would focus on youth and democratic values.

The Delegation of El Salvador concurred with the previous Representative that human prosperity was a new concept, which therefore required further definition. The Representative of El Salvador offered to support the Process, in its capacity as Chair of the Central American Integration System (SICA).

The Delegation of Mexico expressed its support for the concept of human prosperity and the implementation of public policies for the promotion and protection of human rights and better education to foster job creation.

The Delegation of the Dominican Republic expressed that the theme of human prosperity was pertinent to its country and stressed the importance of education in the Paper. The Delegate proposed the establishment of a fund to encourage human development in specific sectors and areas and concluded that it was

important to have a follow-up mechanism to track the outcomes of the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

The Delegation of Costa Rica proposed that countries that extracted hydrocarbons should give back to the environment and seek to protect it. Another challenge to energy independence was promoting oil exploration while maintaining administrative control by the State, establishing a tax system with strict regulations to protect the environment.

The Delegation of The Bahamas highlighted the cross-cutting nature of the issues in the Preliminary Concept Paper, the need to focus on good governance and the implementation of past Summit mandates. The Representative stressed the importance of coordinating the activities of international agencies and avoiding duplication of efforts so that resources are not wasted and the quality of people's lives is improved. The Delegate announced that the Government of The Bahamas was in the process of finalising their report for 2007.

The Delegation of Nicaragua underscored the need to include gender as a cross cutting issue in the Paper, and emphasised the need to make correct reference to indigenous peoples and afro descendants, in order to reflect the multicultural nature of the peoples of the Americas.

The Delegation of Venezuela expressed that the proposed concept, human prosperity, needed further discussion. This Delegation suggested that the revised document should show a clear correlation between economic growth and social development. The Representative called for a reference to development to achieve equity and social inclusion and suggested that the draft declaration include the right to development as an inalienable human right.

The Delegation of Ecuador considered the concept of human prosperity to be broad, requiring a definition in order to avoid misinterpretation of the term by countries.

The Delegation of Jamaica recognised the wide ranging nature of the Concept Paper and agreed with the proposed focus on the strengthening of national and regional efforts to eliminate poverty and inequality, and accelerate economic growth as an essential element of the process and development. The Representative of Jamaica recommended that any policy considerations should not be greater than Countries' implementation capacity or resources.

The Jamaican Representative raised the need to examine with the impact of HIV/AIDS and the efforts being made to address this challenge. The Representative of Jamaica also wished to see greater promotion of the Caribbean's development agenda.

The Delegation of Jamaica made reference to the promotion of public/private sector partnerships within the context of advancing development objectives, and the strengthening of this model to provide essential services to citizens. The Representative also felt that the paper should address the importance of mainstreaming gender into the development agenda.

The Delegation of Barbados supported the Preliminary Concept Paper and noted that the issues of financing and the implementation of the mandates needed to be addressed.

The Delegation of Guyana suggested that it was important to increase the supply capability and competitiveness of countries through the creation and support for micro, small and medium sized enterprises as a means of addressing economic growth. The Representative also noted the challenge of the digital divide and the importance of connectivity in the region.

The Director of the OAS Summits Secretariat urged the Countries to engage themselves fully in the Summits Process in order to move the agenda forward in a manner that would guide the future cooperation and partnership in the hemisphere. The OAS Representative mentioned that the Summits Secretariat was preparing a report on the achievements of past Summits based on an analysis of the existing challenges.

The PAHO Delegate informed that the institution was preparing a report on the achievements in the area of the issues contained in the Preliminary Concept Paper, as well as on the challenges. The Representative noted that the Health for the Americas plan provided a solid foundation for work in that area for the next five years and stressed the importance of Non-Communicable Diseases to the future health of the Americas.

The Representative of ECLAC provided additional data to complement what was presented by the National Secretariat, and informed that the institution was examining areas in the Preliminary Concept Paper in order to identify where ECLAC could make a contribution.

IICA remained concerned with the issue of strengthening institutional frameworks and mentioned that the Organisation had a standardised format for reporting on follow-up work.

The CDB took the opportunity to highlight some of its current activities, including work on disaster risk reduction, the Special Development Fund to assist in the reduction of poverty and work on small and medium sized enterprises.

The ILO recognised the role of decent work and full employment in the document. The Representative highlighted the importance of social dialogue, among institutions, governments, people and civil society, which is key to making the mandates work.

### **Presentation and Dialogue on thematic area: Energy Security**

The Thematic Coordinator made a presentation on Energy Security, which outlined the challenges faced today in this area, which included sharply rising demand for oil and gas, high prices, increasing competition for resources, concerns about supply constraints and the possible approach of peak oil and concerns about the carbon loading of the atmosphere and climate change.

The Delegation of the United States of America encouraged governments to focus on the themes of energy security and environmental sustainability, which offer the best possibilities for developing initiatives with practical consequences. The Delegation recalled that the Declaration of Panama, adopted at the OAS General Assembly in 2007, stated that democratic governance, strong democratic institutions, the rule of law, and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are essential elements in advancing the energy and sustainable development goals of Member States and the region, combating social exclusion and fostering the public good.

The Delegation of Mexico focused on the need for harmonising the importance of energy for development and its role and impact on the environment, climate change and natural resources.

The Delegation of Mexico expressed the importance of access to energy; the mitigation of climate change through the development of renewable and clean energy technologies; the creation and consolidation of energy alternatives; the importance of cooperation in emergency situations; and the need for energy efficiency.

The Delegation of Canada supported the focus on energy security and sustainable development for the Fifth Summit, which build upon the Declaration of Panama. The Representative suggested that energy security could be enhanced by the diversification of the energy matrix and sources of supply and also through extending access to modern energy services supported by transparent, regulatory, fiscal and judicial regimes.

The Delegation of Chile identified two key challenges - how to ensure a safe, secure supply of energy and how to find energy supplies that are compatible with the sustainable development of our societies. The Delegation asserted that regional energy security was possible through an enabling judicial framework and regional cooperation.

The Delegation of the Dominican Republic also highlighted the importance of regional cooperation in the transfer of technology in energy.

The Delegation of Venezuela recognised that many factors contributed to high oil prices, and mentioned several initiatives in energy cooperation for integral development and supported the linkages between energy, sustainable development and food security.

The Delegation of Colombia referred to the importance of increasing the energy basket and the role of alternative energy sources, the intensification of measures to transfer technology, and the more efficient use of conventional energy. On this basis, the Delegation suggested the avoidance of a concept, such as low carbon usage, which had not been accepted at a regional level. In this respect Colombia emphasized the importance of bearing in mind the concepts and language approved in the Declaration of Panama by the last OAS General Assembly.

The Delegation of Panama called for reflection on the leadership role that the state should play in defining and implementing sustainable policies, and in

assuming the role of planners and regulators in the area of innovation. The state should also ensure sustainable policies that have a real social impact.

The Delegate of Ecuador underlined his government's commitment to protect the national, regional and world biodiversity and mentioned the decisions taken by his government to promote measures to mitigate climate change and the production of greenhouse gases. The Delegate of Ecuador noted that this initiative went hand in hand with energy security and environmental sustainability and promoted research of alternative sources of energy. He also recognised that the indigenous peoples were an example of the equilibrium between food and the use of energy in the region.

ECLAC highlighted the progress made in some countries of the region in the area of renewable energy resources.

### **Presentation and Dialogue on thematic area: Environmental Sustainability**

The Thematic Coordinator delivered a presentation on environmental sustainability, which explored key issues such as increasing resource demand and rising prices, climate change, deforestation in the tropics and the loss of biodiversity.

The Delegation of the United States of America expressed the view that the environment should be featured more prominently as one of the pillars of sustainable development, in light of the linkage between the environment and social and economic development, and that it should be more broadly discussed, beyond climate change.

The Representative also supported a regional focus on enhancing resilience to climate variability and change, including promotion of sound economic development and incorporation of climate change considerations into development planning and projects.

The Delegation of Chile stated that the linkage between the environment and development required joint action to solve environmental problems together with economic growth, and referred to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg which recognised the sovereign right of countries to govern their resources and to assume responsibility for preventing environmental degradation.

The Delegation of El Salvador expressed the importance of technical cooperation in the protection of the environment and the prevention of the causes of climate change. The Salvadorian Representative regretted the lack of a single regional organisation dealing with natural disasters to coordinate the work of the numerous sub-regional mechanisms in this field and called for this to be addressed in the near future.

The Delegation of Canada reminded the Countries that the Declaration of Panama and the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali dealt with the issue of sustainable development and offered an approach in this area.

The Delegation of Mexico called for cooperation between governments and civil society in order to have an effective solution to the problem of climate change and recognised the importance of intra-regional cooperation in the areas of financing and transfer of technology.

The Delegation of The Bahamas called for a collective approach to the issue of climate change, underscoring the need for support for some Small Island States, such as early warning systems, to help them prepare and therefore reduce the impact of natural disasters.

The Delegation of Colombia highlighted the importance of a cooperative approach and the use of clean technologies. The Delegation also stressed the importance of defining progress based on the Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, rather than suggesting new regional strategies. In this regard, it requested clarification on the shared global approach.

The OAS reminded that the Inter-American Meeting of National Authorities and Experts on Energy for Sustainable Development in America would be held on March 3, in Washington D.C., the results of which would be made available to the National Coordinators as well as to members of the Joint Summit Working Group.

After the comments from the countries and partner institutions, the meeting adjourned for the day.

### **February 29, 2008**

The second day of the XLI Meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group commenced with remarks delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon.

Minister Gopee-Scoon expressed what an honour it was for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to host the Fifth Summit in April 2009, to be able to build on the achievements of previous Summits and to bridge ideas and find common approaches that would shape a new agenda for the hemisphere.

The Honourable Minister also reaffirmed the importance of this meeting of the SIRG as a symbol of Trinidad and Tobago's commitment to a policy of inclusion and to the process of consultation and engagement in preparation for the Fifth Summit and expressed her appreciation for the broad support communicated by Delegations for the Preliminary Concept Paper, as well as for the comments made following the presentations on the thematic areas of the Fifth Summit.

Upon conclusion of those remarks, the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs departed the meeting and the ordinary session continued with comments from the Delegation of Brazil, which joined the proceedings on the second day of the meeting and presented its intervention on the pillars based on the Concept Paper.

On the theme of human prosperity, the Delegation of Brazil suggested that the issue of hunger could be addressed through a series of public policies, food distribution and support to the agricultural sector. The Representative called for a



reduction in the disparities in education, the enhancement of health programmes and recognised the need for advancements in and access to biomedical services.

In the area of energy security, the Representative of Brazil underlined the importance of adopting an energy policy, which included cleaner technology, energy integration, and improved access to conventional and alternative energy sources. With respect to environmental sustainability, this Delegation called for strengthened capacity in information sharing and humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of natural disasters and suggested the inclusion of access to land, as well as international transboundary water issues, under this third pillar.

### **Presentation and Dialogue on Cross Cutting Issues**

The Thematic Coordinator delivered a presentation on cross cutting issues, such as democracy and good governance, hemispheric security and the promotion of human rights, and underlined their complexity. He also referred to the need to take a new approach to the implementation, financing and monitoring of the Summit of the Americas mandates.

The Delegation of the United States of America stressed the importance of the participation of civil society in the Summits Process and the need for an open and transparent process.

The Delegation of Brazil expressed that the information presented at the meeting illustrated a hemispheric situation that required a response by the Heads of State and Government of the region. The Representative concurred with the previous Delegation's point on the importance of civil society participation in the Summit Process. The Delegate also stressed that the Summit Process would benefit from the regularisation of Ministerial and Summit meetings.

The Colombian Delegation expressed its agreement with the focus on strengthening the existing framework rather than creating a new institutionality. It also reiterated the importance of focussing on the implementation of mandates with feasible targets for countries and linking these to institutional cooperation and support, as well as horizontal cooperation.

The Delegation of Ecuador supported the need for better coordination mechanisms to fulfil the Summit mandates. The Delegation of Guyana called for a practical means of monitoring the implementation of mandates and the Delegation of Venezuela underscored the need to ensure that civil society participation in the Summit Process was truly representative.

PAHO highlighted that, in cooperation with IICA, they would be hosting an Inter-Ministerial Meeting on Health and Agriculture, which would address the issues of equity, climate change, agro-energy, food security and economic growth. The Delegate also said that the 28<sup>th</sup> Pan American Sanitary Conference would take place in early October and would focus on climate change and health.

## **Schedule of Preparatory Activities for the Fifth Summit of the Americas**

The Chair of the SIRG outlined that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago would continue consultations on the Concept Paper, with a view to producing a final document by April.

The Chair informed the participants that a draft of the outcome document for the Fifth Summit of the Americas would be presented to the OAS General Assembly in Medellin, Colombia in June 2008.

The Chair also informed of the plans of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to host a Hemispheric Consultation for Civil Society towards the end of April 2008.

## **Closing Remarks**

In concluding the XLI Meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group, the Chair thanked the Countries and Joint Summit Working Group for their contribution, which, in his view, had enriched the preparatory process towards the Fifth Summit of the Americas. Ambassador Rodríguez thanked the OAS and the Summits Secretariat for their participation and reiterated the commitment of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to continue working closely with all actors in preparation for the Summit.