



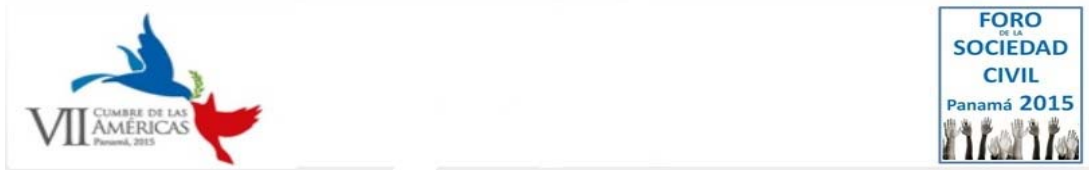
Organization of  
American States



SOCIAL ACTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE  
ACTIVITIES OF THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS PROCESS  
SOCIAL ACTORS FORUMS  
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**CONCLUSIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ACTORS FORUM  
PANAMA, APRIL 8-10, 2015**



**CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ACTORS FORUM  
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CONCLUSIONS**

The civil society organizations meeting in Panama City on April 8-10, 2015 hereby present to the Presidents and Heads of State of the Americas the conclusions of the Hemispheric Civil Society Forum held within the framework of the Summit of the Americas, in Panama, 2015.

The recommendations were the fruit of two days of deliberations and dialogue in seven panels on a variety of topics.

**EDUCATION**

**Education and Culture**

Recognizing that high quality education and culture are human rights that should be prioritized from early childhood on, we propose the following to the governments of the Hemisphere:

**Establishment and Implementation of Public Policies**

- Without political will, there will be no progress in the development of our peoples. States are therefore duty-bound to guarantee the provision of comprehensive, liberating education, with equity and dignity, and without any discrimination or exclusion of any kind.
- States should render accounts each year and set concrete targets for narrowing today's gaps. Their rendering of accounts needs to include specifics, evaluation of institutions, and follow-up.
- Education will serve to restore the historical memory, culture, and identity of peoples. Public policies need to be in sync with social policies, civic education, and sustainable development.
- Together with society, States will establish a Hemispheric Forum for Education that will meet in each country on a standing basis, along with an educational observatory to monitor progress.
- The proposals it puts forward need to be mindful of inclusion, equity, inclusive family participation, and adult and early education geared to fostering a culture of peace.

Dissenting comment: "Family" should read: fathers, mother, and guardians.

**Inclusive Education and Culture**

- [We recommend] That States commit to education and culture for the all-round development of human beings.
- That they integrate the family into the teaching and learning process, proactively, and welcoming its suggestions for the education of the children.
- That values be imparted that conveys the responsibility of parents and society in the forging of a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic State.
- Eliminating all forms of discrimination, as required by international instruments, be they based on cultural identity, race, social class, belief, religion, sexual orientation, disability, abilities, skills, gender identity, ethnic origin, age, migration status, nationality, cultural origins, subculture, marital status, language, profession, political position, state of health, wage inequality, pregnancy, or genes.
- Access-friendly infrastructure, based on global standards.
- Age-appropriate education about sexuality and emotions.
- Guaranteeing access to information, communication, alternative media and implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.
- Re-examining and updating curricula at every level.
- Decentralized planning of educational establishments.
- More in-depth environmental education.
- Validation of the knowledge acquired through non-formal education.

Dissenting comment: Include both traditional and nontraditional families in the teaching-learning process.

### **Teacher Training**

- Determine what needs to be done to ensure comprehensive initial teacher training: specific training and the implementation of mechanisms for acknowledging future educators' vocations. The media need to play an important part in this. The training imparted needs to be of a very high level and demanding with respect to both theoretical and practical aspects, the use of new technologies and best practices, as implemented by the countries in the region through pedagogical conferences. The idea is to train "inclusiveness-conscious" teachers.
- Ongoing training and teacher evaluation should be based on quality indicators derived from the identification of skills, competencies, and key practices.

- The evaluation mechanisms need to be participatory and they should be conducted by teachers, administrative staff, and families. The findings of the evaluation should be used to provide feedback for teacher training needs.

### **Investment**

In this case, investment is construed to mean equitable distribution of human, financial, and technological capital, in such a way as to guarantee equal opportunity and capacity through:

- Sustainable infrastructure with high-quality, basic, Twenty-First Century services.
- An increase in the GDP subject to impact assessment and accountability.
- Sustained enhancement of teaching as a career with high social status.
- Social coordination of all the actors involved to ensure that priority is accorded to education and culture as catalysts for social change.

We urge the Presidents and Heads of State -- as a manifestation of their determination to fulfill the mandates of the Summit of the Americas in Panama, 2015 -- to propose to the governments represented at said Summit that, in the next three months, they submit to the SIRG the targets to be met for each mandate over the next three years, so that citizens can monitor their progress and hold governments accountable before the next Summit.

## **HEALTH**

**At the Civil Society Forum held during the 7th Summit of the Americas, the members of the Working Group on HEALTH, representing 16 countries, have voted on and agreed to send the following recommendations to the participating heads of state:**

1. Civil society **DENOUNCES** that a high percentage of the population in the regions states lack basic health care. **WE DEMAND** respect for health as an inalienable human right and compliance with the state's responsibility of guaranteeing universal, free, and equitable access to health care, without discrimination or stigmatization of any kind, based on preventive and community medicine, and to safe treatments to guarantee quality in health with respect for interculturality and with protection for vulnerable groups.
2. **WE DEMAND** that states manage the financial resources earmarked for health with transparency and that they give society due account of the planning, use, management, and results thereof. This will be achieved by implementing a monitoring and evaluation system to allow compliance and progress with baseline indicators to be measured.
3. **STRENGTHEN** international, multisectoral, and interdisciplinary cooperation to deal with emergency situations, disasters, and epidemic outbreaks, and in comprehensive attention for the entire population, encouraging the participation of organized civil society.
4. **GUARANTEE** universal access to drinking water and the protection by the state of water resources.

5. **PRIORITIZE** the comprehensive protection of health and nutrition for mothers and babies through education, promotion, prevention, and care strategies.
6. **GUARANTEE** access to sexual and reproductive health with a rights-based approach for all persons.
7. **WE RECOMMEND** that states take the steps necessary to prevent smuggling of medicines, which threatens the lives of citizens.

**We therefore request that the states, at the next Summit, present a report on progress with health issues, with these RECOMMENDATIONS, and with the agreements of this Summit.**

### **ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**We, the members of the Panel on Energy, Sustainable Development and Environment of the Seventh Summit of the Americas, having gathered in Panama City, Panama, on April 10, 2015, pursuant to the mandates agreed upon for this historic summit, have reached consensus on the following:**

**We affirm that in order to attain a high level of human development it is necessary to foster environmental sustainability in the economic activities and public policies of States, as well as alignment of markets and social actors in the interests of ensuring the sustainability of life on the planet.**

We propose that the governance of countries be oriented toward the sustainable use of ecosystems and species.

We request that the human right to a healthy environment be observed, in particular for indigenous peoples, rural communities, and people of African descent, as the basis of environmental good governance in countries; we demand genuine free and informed prior consultation and their consent with regard to extractivist activities and megaprojects in our hemisphere.

We demand an end to environmental racism and criminalization of the work of activists by states and large corporations—particularly transnational ones—especially that done in defense of the most fragile ecosystems and the most vulnerable populations.

We recognize community-based watchdogs as an oversight, monitoring, and reporting mechanism. We also request the creation and funding of a hemispheric civil society agency to monitor compliance with environmental standards, with authority to take up complaints and to issue technical and scientific recommendations.

We acknowledge that climate change is the main environmental threat to sustainable development in the Americas. We urge governments to participate in COP21 (Paris 2015) and to adopt binding and effective commitments to mitigation, adaptation, risk management, financing, development, and technology transfer in keeping with their historical responsibilities. We also ask that States and multilateral finance institutions align all their actions in order to address climate change effectively.

We demand the elimination of unilateral business and financial activities that undermine how climate change is confronted.

We reiterate that equitable access to water is a human right and, therefore, that preserving, restoring and protecting aquifer recharge areas as the basis of the water cycle is a priority for meeting human needs, particularly where food production is concerned. We request that governments implement environmental sanitation programs as a critically urgent strategy for protecting water sources.

We urge governments, multilateral finance institutions, international agencies and public and private actors to implement sustainable-energy systems as a strategy for modifying consumption patterns and averting ecosystem degradation, while simultaneously diversifying the energy matrix, facilitating community-based generation and co-generation of clean energy.

Advancing this agenda requires strengthening environmental cooperation, education and research actions under an equity-aware perspective.

**We regard all of the above as essential steps in joint environmental stewardship for ensuring prosperity with environmental equity for current and future generations throughout the Hemisphere.**

## **SECURITY**

States must recognize that security is a concern for individuals because it affects their daily lives and overall development, as well as the effective fulfillment of human rights. Governments must guarantee protection against chronic threats, such as hunger, disease and violence in all forms, while abiding by the principle of self-determination and sovereignty of peoples, and preventing violation of their rights, either by their governments or other states.

States should recognize that prevention, particularly of social inequality, is critical to public policies on security. We recommend the reduction of inequity through the generation of decent work, quality education, the fostering of a culture of peace, and the declaration of the entire Americas region as a zone of peace. In a participatory democracy the functional family is the engine of prevention, and the State its guarantor.

We recommend the adoption of prevention policies on use of the Internet and social media as vehicles for spreading hate speech, while safeguarding freedom of expression.

We recommend the creation of the position of Rapporteur on Human Security, who would be elected in consultation with civil society organizations, in order to follow up and promote institution-building in States in a framework of independence, legality, and respect for human rights, with a view to monitoring public policies on security, identifying their initial effects and impacts, and measuring criminality.

The freedom of human-rights defenders to carry out their work should be facilitated and guaranteed, as should protection for victims of crime, witnesses, and whistleblowers.

States must recognize that people deprived of their liberty are possessed of rights, and should apply best correctional practices, eradicating torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. We demand that States make sure that no one else dies due to violence and lack of medical assistance. We request that States allow the IACHR to conduct visits to assess prison conditions and ensure that prisons are genuine reintegration facilities managed with a commitment to lawfulness and human rights.

Dissenting comment 1. We recommend the development of protocols and mechanisms that would allow the creation of a regional DNA and anti-trafficking in person's database.

Dissenting comment 2. Some members of the panel expressed disagreement with the majority proposal concerning prevention policies on use of the Internet as a vehicle for spreading hate speech.

## **MIGRATION**

We approach migration with a rights-based approach and we therefore propose comprehensive public policies that address points of origin, transit, destination, and return, created and implemented with the participation of civil society and other stakeholders, with adequate budgetary allocations.

The interculturality that enriches our peoples must be promoted and respected. All forms of discrimination and xenophobia – particularly by reason of nationality, professional qualifications, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, political preferences, beliefs, and religion – are inadmissible.

We suggest policies to address mixed migratory flows. The greatest challenge is to produce a model that can guarantee employment and allow mobility and human security, respect for and the maintenance of labor rights, and support for small economies, while demanding greater regional integration and endogenous development processes.

The following are among the premises that states should consider:

- States should avail themselves of information and research to update their policies and laws and to modernize the management of migration in order to make it ethically and socially responsible.
- Establish accessible and swift regularization processes.
- That includes agreements between countries to promote labor mobility, such as circular flows, while respecting rights guarantees and the precepts of family reunification.
- Create appropriate national mechanisms to protect such vulnerable groups as human trafficking victims, unaccompanied children, asylum seekers and refugees, etc.
- States should refrain from enacting laws or maintaining practices that create statelessness and, in general, any legislation that is in violation of the obligations they have assumed under international agreements.

We urge the strengthening of access to justice at both the national and international levels; thus, we call for the decisions of international agencies, such as the IACHR and the Inter-American Court, to be timely, effective, and binding and to be complied with to the benefit of at-risk populations, with the creation of permanent monitoring procedures.

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

### **PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

In light of the weakened exercise of democracy, we ask the states to effectively recognize civil society and citizen participation as fundamental human rights. That recognition must be expressed through the creation and improvement of legal frameworks, along with their corresponding institutional mechanisms and forums for training in values and civic capacities, which must start from early childhood.

Guarantee the right to and respect for inclusive citizen participation, free of all forms of discrimination, with consideration of the following groups: people with disabilities, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender and intersex people (LGBTI), people working to defend life and the family, sex workers, women, indigenous peoples and people of African descent, senior citizens, youth, members of organized religions, and political pluralism.

We believe that the following are imperatives for our democracies:

- Strengthening their institutions and the legitimacy of governments elected by means of free, plural, direct, fair, and transparent elections.
- Implementing binding mechanisms for public consultation, such as plebiscites and referendums.
- Protecting the due independence of the branches of government.
- Ensuring regulatory frameworks that guarantee transparency in public information, the right of free association, and universal access to information, and that protect the right of peaceful demonstration without repression.
- Institutionalizing permanent working forums between authorities and civil society.
- Creating accountability mechanisms in the public administration.
- Promoting the development of democratic ethics in the Americas through the implementation of formal and informal education programs that encourage free, informed, and responsible participation.

We therefore recommend creating, without any limitations on participation and with the guaranteed inclusion of all persons, the Permanent Inter-American Forum of Civil Society and Social Actors, to provide a continuous process of consultations, recommendations, and proposals, together with follow-up of the implementation of the agreements reached. We instruct the OAS to establish a participatory



mechanism for the design and implementation of the Permanent Inter-American Forum of Civil Society and Social Actors.

## **DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

Considering peace as a vital aspect of democratic governance in the Hemisphere, where a marked deterioration in human rights and a weakening of democracy coexist, we propose:

### Hemispheric Level

1. To call on the OAS to fulfill its role as guarantor democracy and respect for human rights.
2. The creation of a special rapporteurship for democracy, under the IACHR, providing it with effective mechanisms for monitoring and compliance with the principles of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and integrity of elections.
3. To create a civil society forum as a mechanism for dialogue with the OAS Permanent Council.
4. To commit to strengthening the inter-American system (IAHRS) by abiding by its decisions, giving it needed resources, and getting all countries to ratify the American Convention on Human Rights.
5. To really commit to ensuring inclusion, equality, and non-discrimination; and to urge states of the Americas that has not signed the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Related Forms of Intolerance to do so.
6. To recognize, protect, and respect the work of human rights defenders and to adopt an American Declaration to that end.

### National Level

1. To establish mechanisms to ensure ongoing dialogue between civil society and governments toward effective citizen participation in defining public policies and building citizenship and a culture of peace from childhood.
2. To establish mechanisms for an independent and autonomous judiciary and eradication of corruption and impunity.
3. To call on governments to pursue foreign policy based on international law and the United Nations Charter, real separation and independence of the branches of government, and peaceful settlement of disputes; to stop criminalizing social protest, stop police abuse, racial profiling, and arbitrary arrests; and to release political prisoners.
4. To create synergy between institutions and oversight bodies in order to foster good governance based on accountability.

5. To demand of governments a more equitable distribution of wealth and sources of income that enable full access to basic services, quality education, and decent housing and work.