



Red de Derechos Humanos de Panamá

VII SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS Panama, April 10-11, 2015

HEMISPHERIC FORUM OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIAL ACTORS

Procedural Guidelines for the development of the Work

Introduction

Based on the experience of previous Summits, the Government of Panama will be hosting four Forums prior to the VII Summit, to allow for deliberations on the thematic themes proposed for analysis by the governments and provide the Heads of States and Government with input for their debates – generated through interaction between governments and important societal sectors such as civil society, the business sector, academia and youth -, so that they can approve a series of mandates for action at the Hemispheric Level

The Thematic Themes of the VII Summit of the Americas are: Education, Health, Energy and Environment, Migration and Security, Democratic Governance and Citizen Participation.

The Government of Panama and Panamanian civil society organizations – under the coordination of the Panamanian Human Rights Network - will be co-hosting the **Hemispheric Forum of Civil Society and Social Actors** which will take place in Panama City on April 8-10, 2015.

These simple Procedural Guidelines for Civil Society and Social Actors are proposed by the Panamanian civil society, through the Panamanian Human Rights Network, in order to organize the work of the Hemispheric Forum, make effective use of available time for the exchanges of opinions, and define a methodology to reach expected results and prevent digressions in the debates.

Organization of the Work

The participation process in the Hemispheric Forum of Civil Society and Social Actors was carried out through an open announcement to all the countries of the Americas. Through this process, many civil society organizations and social actors applied with the Summits Secretariat. Given the large number of organizations and social actors who showed interest in participating, and taking into account the limited space available, it was necessary to make a balanced selection among the applicants who fulfilled the requirements established in the announcement. As in prior occasions, this selection was balanced and took into account the criteria of national, geographic and gender distribution, expertise and knowledge regarding the themes of the VII Summit, and thematic networks.

The Hemispheric Forum will begin on **Wednesday, April 8**, with a Panel of recognized international dignitaries who will address the main themes of the Summit and contribute their political, social, labor and environmental ideas for the deliberations of the Hemispheric Forum.

The formal work of the Forum will begin with a plenary session where the development of the work will be explained by the Panamanian civil society and where the methodology for the work will be agreed upon.

The participants will join one of the six **Working Groups** corresponding to the previously mentioned thematic areas of the VII Summit. The Groups will work in separate rooms, until they meet for plenary sessions as specified in the Program.

Coordination of the Work

The Panamanian civil society deemed essential for the success of the Forum that the work be carried out in an environment of responsibility, respect and tolerance for the ideas and opinions of the vast diversity of participants. It is the responsibility of all to establish this atmosphere since the decision to participate in the forum was made freely and voluntarily by each individual or organization. Accordingly, we assume that all the participants want the forum to be a success.

The Panamanian civil society proposes that the coordination of the Working Groups be under the responsibility of two **Co-facilitators** with equal competencies. The **Co-facilitators** will be proposed by the Panamanian civil society taking into account geographic and gender balance as well as thematic expertise and knowledge.

At the end of the Hemispheric Forum, a meeting between civil society and government will take place on the afternoon of Friday, April 10. Some of the countries will be represented by their Heads of State. Each of the six Working Groups will have the opportunity to present the public policy recommendations they agreed upon to the governments and the governments in turn will be able to respond to these proposals.

As such, the recommendations agreed upon by each Group cannot go beyond **350 words** and each Group must select a Spokesperson who will present them in the Dialogue with the Heads of Delegation. Each presentation cannot go beyond 3 minutes.

The Spokespersons will have to be chosen by each Group on the afternoon of the Thursday, April 9 session at the latest.

As this is a Hemispheric Forum aimed at analyzing and formulating recommendations on specific topics from a regional perspective, the reports that each Group present to the Governments may not make reference to specific cases of countries.

The work of each Group will be coordinated by the Co-Facilitators who will apply customary parliamentary norms for the directing of the debates thereby guaranteeing the right to free, equal and democratic participation to all the participants in the Group.

When participants speak, it is hoped that they will adhere strictly to the theme of their respective working group and that they will make concrete and brief contributions in order to make the most efficient and productive use of available time and achieve expected results. When granting and managing the right to speak, the Co-facilitators will strive to ensure that participants follow these procedures.

In addition to being presented in person to the Governments, the recommendations of the six Working Groups will be compiled by the Government of Panama and the Summits Secretariat to be formally included in the documents to be considered by the delegations in their deliberations. They will also be published in the webpage of the VII Summit.

Panama, March 15, 2015.