



Organization of  
American States



SOCIAL ACTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE  
ACTIVITIES OF THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS PROCESS  
Social Actors Forum

OEA/Ser.E  
ASCA/Foro-29/12  
20 March 2012  
Original: Spanish

---

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SOCIAL ACTORS TO THE PREPARATORY PROCESS FOR THE SIXTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

SEPTEMBER 2011 – MARCH 2012

### Introduction

The General Secretariat of the OAS Summits of the Americas Secretariat hosted a broad program of activities to foster the contribution and participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) and other social actors during the preparatory stages of the Summit. This series of activities helped to ensure an inclusive process towards the Sixth Summit of the Americas in April 2012, under the main theme, “**Connecting the Americas: Partners for Prosperity.**”

As part of this participatory process, the OAS carried out a series of activities entitled “**Policy Dialogues: The Road to Cartagena**”, which were designed to include both virtual and face-to-face dialogues in order to provide ongoing, timely opportunities for social actors to consolidate and effectively channel inputs and recommendations for the consideration of member states during the negotiation of Sixth Summit mandates.

There were three participation mechanisms in this series of Policy Dialogues:

- **Summit Talk:** virtual consultations moderated by thematic experts that took place via the Summit Virtual Community (SVC) ([www.summit-americas.org/svc](http://www.summit-americas.org/svc)), which lasted for approximately one month in order to facilitate broad participation;
- **OAS Policy Roundtables:** an event open to the public and transmitted live through the SVC, in which a panel of experts from both the public and private sectors, as well as from international and non-governmental agencies, shared their expertise and ideas and engaged in a discussion on the key Summit themes with member states and the general public;
- **Consultation Sessions and Formulation of Recommendations:** meetings in Washington, DC, of social actor representatives (youth, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples, private sector, academia, afro-descendants, and persons with disabilities) to propose and compile concrete recommendations on the specific Summit themes.

In total, six Summit Talk consultations, five Policy Roundtables, and four Consultation Sessions were held between September 2011 and March 2012 on the main theme and sub-themes

of the Sixth Summit of the Americas, and benefited from the participation of more than 8,900 individuals.

Recommendations resulting from these sessions were presented to meetings of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) on November 7, 2011 in Washington, DC, and on February 13, 2012 in Cartagena, Colombia by social actors' representatives from those consultations. In addition, these recommendations were widely distributed to other stakeholders of the Summits Process.

In addition to the above consultations, recommendations from the III Inter-American Forum for Afro-Descendants, which was held in Bogota on March 12, 2012, and the Private Sector Dialogue "Connecting Businesses, Connecting People in the Americas", held in Washington, DC, on March, 13, 2012, were presented to the SIRG on March 13 and 14, 2012, respectively.

Furthermore, a broad, comprehensive process of engagement with youth was carried out in preparation for the Sixth Summit. This process resulted in the Youth Declaration of Commitment – III Youth Forum of the Americas. These inputs were the outcomes of more than 30 National Dialogues and three Hemispheric Dialogues, in which more than 3,500 young people from throughout the region participated. A virtual consultation for youth was also held, which included more than 205 inputs from 475 participants.

This document compiles the recommendations from these consultations in order to inform member states and other interested stakeholders in preparation for the pre-Summit activities, the Dialogue "Strengthening Partnerships for Prosperity: A Government and Social Actor Dialogue for Action" and in the preparation of proposals for implementation of initiatives linked to the outcomes of the Sixth Summit to be held in April 2012 in Cartagena, Colombia.

Complete information on these activities can be found at the Summits of the Americas Website at: [www.summit-americas.org/cs/vi\\_participation.html](http://www.summit-americas.org/cs/vi_participation.html)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Summits of the Americas Secretariat would like to thank the following areas of the OAS General Secretariat that collaborated in the consultation process with social actors, including: the Department of International Affairs; the Department for Effective Public Management; the Department of Public Security; the Inter-American Commission on Women; and the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development through the Department of Human Development, Education, and Culture; the Department of Economic Development, Trade, and Tourism; the Department of Social Development and Employment; and the Department of Sustainable Development.

We would also like to thank the institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) as well as the Young Americas Business Trust and Global Rights: Partners for Justice for their support.

COMPILATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**I. “THE ROAD TO CARTAGENA: HEMISPHERIC COOPERATION FOR REDUCING POVERTY AND INEQUALITIES”**..... page 5

**II. “THE ROAD TO CARTAGENA: HEMISPHERIC COOPERATION TO COMBAT NATURAL DISASTERS”**..... p. 7

**III. “THE ROAD TO CARTAGENA: HEMISPHERIC COOPERATION TO PROMOTE ACCESS TO AND USE OF TECHNOLOGIES”**..... p. 10

**IV. “THE ROAD TO CARTAGENA: HEMISPHERIC COOPERATION TO STRENGTHEN SECURITY”**..... p. 12

**V. III INTER-AMERICAN AFRO-DESCENDANT FORUM: “AFRO-DESCANDANTS’ PARTICIPATION AND ADVOCACY IN THE VI SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS CONECTING THE AMERICAS: PARTNERS FOR PROSPERITY”**..... p. 14

**VI. PRIVATE SECTOR DIALOGUE “CONNECTING BUSINESSES, CONNECTING PEOPLE IN THE AMERICAS”**..... p. 17

**VII. DRAFT DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE AMERICAS “YOUTH: PARTNERS FOR PROSPERITY”**..... p. 20

**I. “THE ROAD TO CARTAGENA: HEMISPHERIC COOPERATION FOR REDUCING POVERTY AND INEQUALITIES”  
Washington, DC, November 3-4, 2011**

The social actors participating in the Summits of the Americas process invite the member states to ponder on the development model sought for the region. That would allow an understanding of the poverty, inequality, and unequal social conditions that exist in our countries and, consequently, of the policies suitable for putting an end to them.

Overcoming those inequities demands commitment toward social protection policies that uphold human rights from the local, national, and regional levels. That implies the commitment of the developed states and of the private sector, without losing national autonomy, within a framework of positive discrimination, to confront the historical inequalities of such social groups as Afro-descendants, indigenous people, women, children, youth, rural populations, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and with different sexualities, etc.

Thus, to overcome these challenges, we propose the following themes:

CITIZENSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Promote greater political participation by the citizenry to influence the development of state policies. For this, the government must allow the citizenry to organize itself and enjoy the principles of autonomy, self-determination, and freedom of expression and association.

Effective social policy requires placing the people affected by poverty and exclusion at the center of strategies, as active agents in their development and not as passive recipients of government policies. In a framework of joint responsibility, the citizenry is expected to assume its commitment of involving, training, developing, and organizing itself in order to participate effectively, based on respect for local autonomy and on planning processes at the municipal level.

Enable the establishment of work panels with civil society, the productive sector, cooperation agencies, and all social actors, to produce working agendas with a view to implementing and monitoring the agreements of the Summits.

HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Promote the implementation of universal public policies for health and education coverage, which are essential for reducing poverty; this would guarantee interdependence with other rights, such as food; food security; access to curative, preventive, and promotional health services that recognize sexual and reproductive health; and the care and protection of the environment.

Civil society demands that the governments increase the levels of GDP assigned to health and education programs, by at least 8% for health and 7% for education, thus strengthening the state’s role vis-à-vis the market.

SOCIAL PROTECTION, ECONOMIC, AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Employment policies must ensure protection for workers in the informal economy and decent jobs, and the creation of job training and technical assistance programs. Governments must assist

those efforts in order to create employment opportunities through cooperation and the coordination of joint state policies between the government and the private sector.

Poverty and inequality can be reduced by reforming the justice and security systems, providing historically excluded sectors with access to justice.

States must encourage redistributive policies that strengthen their actions in fighting the poverty and inequalities that exist in our countries, within a framework of collaboration to meet the challenges they face. It is essential that each sector assume specific responsibilities and that cooperation and inter-sectoral partnerships are fostered, to address shared objectives.

Governments must play a leading role in upholding labor rights, preventing the exploitation of children, trafficking in persons, and other forms of labor exploitation. They must also allocate budgetary resources to help eradicate gender violence.

Governments must ensure that funds are assigned so they can play a bigger role in helping people escape poverty. Governments are also responsible for ensuring funds for the development of infrastructure in all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Step up efforts so that the region provides for the social protection of women and children in the informal economy, and guarantee the economically active population opportunities for decent work. In particular, the social actors note the urgent need for contributions to overcome the poverty and inequality facing the people of Haiti.

The following items list some of the main tasks of the different social actors:

- Private sector: corporate social responsibility, working for partnerships with communities to take advantage of the special skills offered by their cultures and traditions.
- Social actors as agents for social oversight, advocates for fostering and promoting transparency, and participants in the design of policies through such means as discussion panels in conjunction with local productive sectors.
- Ensure that the equal ability to enjoy rights and opportunities is enjoyed by all people.
- Work with grassroots communities to implement social policies and empower the communities served.
- International organizations must abandon actions based on paternalism and assistencialism. In addition, international cooperation must be harmonized and dialogue among agencies ensured.

**II. “THE ROAD TO CARTAGENA: HEMISPHERIC COOPERATION TO COMBAT  
NATURAL DISASTERS”  
Washington, DC, November 3-4, 2011**

We, the representatives of the nongovernmental and social organizations, in the context of the Summits Process and of the Policy Dialogue “The Road to Cartagena” at the consultation meeting on **Natural Disasters**, offer the following recommendations, bearing in mind the following strategic lines for intervention:

POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

**The governments should include the following as priority topics on their agendas:**

- Formulate and implement plans, programs, and actions to prevent and manage natural phenomena with short-, medium-, and long-term strategies, defining territorial zoning programs on a cross-cutting basis. Encourage politicians to include the topic of risk management on their agendas.
- Prepare budgets and allocate funds for risk prevention and mitigation, assistance, and damage recovery; with emergency protocols for differentiated responses, bearing in mind territorial considerations, ethnicity, gender conditions, age groups, and disabilities, so that people can access them with equal conditions and opportunities.
- The formulation of public policies for resilience for mitigation and prevention among the most vulnerable groups, building their technical capacity by using traditional and modern technologies.
- Design and implement programs for effective transparency for accountability on risk topics, and establish mechanisms and roles in inter-institutional and inter-sectoral coordination processes among the government and civil society and other social actors.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- Promote the inclusion of the promotion, protection, and upholding of human rights in comprehensive disaster risk management, to ensure the proper handling of affected persons with dignity and equality, without discriminating against vulnerable groups and treating them in accordance with the particular needs of specific population groups.
- Guarantee mechanisms for the participation of vulnerable and affected people in defining programs and actions related to prevention, mitigation, response, and post-disaster recovery, and in the participatory supervision of infrastructure projects and works related to risk management.
- Strengthen the mechanisms for environmental impact studies and disaster risk management in infrastructure construction processes and in processes involving the intensive exploitation of natural resources.
- Develop a broad program of hemispheric cooperation, with programs for regional and subnational cooperation and for exchanges of good practices and experiences, involving

civil society and promoting the development of risk management at the political, technical, and social levels.

### RESEARCH

- Conduct and/or update research with qualitative and quantitative analyses to identify the causes and effects of natural disasters in each country, the risks, and the mitigation actions to be implemented, for the creation of public policies that are differentiated for each reality, human group, and geographical setting, such as Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, women, children, young people, people with disabilities, homosexuals, lesbians, and transsexuals, based on the sole principle of human rights and respect for cultures and ancestral knowledge.
- Conduct research for the planning and implementation of diversified economic activities that provide for the empowerment and autonomy of the most vulnerable groups, taking their comparative advantages into account.
- Formulate differentiated public policies, in interaction and consultation with different public, private, and civil society players; similarly, their implementation must respond to monitoring, follow-up, and impact plans, with differentiated statistics and indicators.
- Draw up differentiated response protocols for emergencies, bearing in mind territorial considerations, ethnic and gender conditions, age groups, and disabilities, to ensure access in conditions of equality and dignity for them.

### EDUCATION

- Structure and develop a broad program with universities and centers of higher education, as generators of knowledge and investigation, on disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change through training, incorporation into study programs, the promotion of pure and applied research, and university extension activities.
- Promote a form of education that contributes to the rescue of traditional outlooks and knowledge in the areas of risk and natural disasters, fostering a culture of action and prevention vis-à-vis natural phenomena, through the strengthening of education and information policies and programs and through knowledge management.
- Work for the development of capacities among the most vulnerable populations, the training of community facilitators, and the training of people who work in civil defense organizations, along with management guides with simple manuals or leaflets for mutual assistance in the event of a disaster.
- Implement public policies for the training of school-age children and young people in risk management and disaster response, strengthening their role with working groups that encourage their potential as generators of change and innovation with their own tools and the strengthening of libraries.
- Prepare protocols for dealing with disaster victims, with specialized chapters for the most vulnerable sectors, children, young people, women, and people with disabilities.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

- Include, in all strategic planning processes for RM, the vulnerability of and impacts on populations, with a differentiated approach based on ethnic origin, gender, and age, interconnecting them in the different phases of prevention, mitigation, response preparation, and reconstruction, with resources for their organization bearing in mind verification and control mechanisms.
- Create and/or strengthen mechanisms to promote community resilience, providing a tool for the strengthening of technical capacities and humanitarian assistance for vulnerable communities, paying particular attention to children, ethnic origin, gender, and disabilities.
- Work for greater attention to monitoring systems and opportunities for access to systems, traditions, and new technologies and development.

## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

- Ensure communities have mechanisms for prior consultation that address and respect the governments of particular territories and communities, and institutionalize the participation of civil society as the guarantor of the observance of transparency and anticorruption policies.
- Promote the establishment and operation of a group to coordinate and represent civil society in the field of risk management, to perform duties in the fields of monitoring, executing initiatives, and assisting national policy for risk management and the related commitments acquired at the Summit of the Americas and at other national and international forums.
- Encourage the integration of young people and children as key social actors in promoting a culture of disaster risk management, in light of their importance within the region's demographic structure and their capacity for change and participation, promoting their empowerment and leadership.
- Ensure gender equality and the participation of women in disaster risk management, with emphasis on post-disaster recovery processes with differentiated response protocols.

## COMMUNICATION

- Institute a national communication system, standardized by the region, for the dissemination of information and early-warnings of atmospheric phenomena, in order to prevent risks, making use of social networks and other communications channels and the social responsibility of the media.
- Create strategies to interconnect national, international, and sub-national mass, alternative, and community public communication and information media outlets, to allow the development of a culture of disaster risk management framed by the principles of corporate social responsibility and solidarity.

**III. “THE ROAD TO CARTAGENA: HEMISPHERIC COOPERATION TO PROMOTE ACCESS TO AND USE OF TECHNOLOGIES”  
Washington, DC, February 9, 2012.**

Considering:

- That the planned, efficient use of information and communications technologies (ICTs)<sup>1</sup> broadens perspectives for economic, technical, and human evolution in the various arenas-- public, private, and social—with impact on the economic and social welfare sectors, and with relevance to education.
- That, according to UNESCO, knowledge is a public good and technology in general and the Worldwide Web in particular provide an extraordinary opportunity for everyone, from anywhere, to share, use, and draw upon that knowledge.
- That policies on incorporating ICT into projects to meet the needs of citizens should be considered in parallel ways: access, endowment, and the concept of an integrated ecosystem.
- That actors from the public, private, academic, and technological development sectors, as well as civil society organizations, have participated, in a context of democracy and cooperation, in the evolution of ICTs through the present day.
- That ICTS can be a cross-cutting strategy for improving all areas of human development<sup>2</sup> in a geographic location.
- That the representatives of the academic sector and civil society participating in this meeting consider it our responsibility to provide elements that will help the OAS member state governments to design a plan for more fully integrating their countries into the knowledge society, for which purpose digital accessibility is one of the strategies to be considered.

WE PROPOSE:

ACCESSIBILITY AND RIGHTS

1. That governments call upon society in general to offer proposals on the use and employment of ICTs. The aim is that they be scalable and replicable or adaptable to increase their impact. Projects must have been tested.

2. That all member countries institutionalize access to technology as a legal right of citizens, guaranteeing that it is included in state policy. It is recommended that, in specifying the scope of this right, emphasis be placed on indigenous communities, on persons with physical, mental, or age-related disabilities, and on at-risk groups, and that it include a cross-cutting gender

---

<sup>1</sup> ICTs are defined as the elements and techniques used to process and transmit information, mainly information systems, Internet, and telecommunications.

<sup>2</sup> Human development is understood as placing persons at the center of development, dealing with the potential development of persons, increasing their opportunities and their enjoyment of their freedom to live in accordance with their values and aspirations. (UNDP)

perspective.

3. That governments use open educational resources (OER)<sup>3</sup> to strengthen universal ICT access programs implemented in the region that are intended to meet human needs for basic services: education, health, and, in general, services related to human development.

4. That governments pledge, at the hemispheric level, that in their governance<sup>4</sup> in applying and developing ICTs, they will abide by the principle of participation by the various actors involved, in a context of democracy and transparency.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

1. That governments and civil society—in public-private alliances (PPAs)—identify business opportunities geared toward meeting needs for services that will ensure the sustainability of investments over time in ICT innovation in underprivileged geographic areas. In a parallel fashion, they will endeavor to meet the maintenance, training, management, and other service needs of the greatest possible number of citizens and to link social sector entrepreneurs for the promotion of ICT-related business initiatives in the Americas on the basis of such determinations.

2. That governments consider including ICT-related services, as a matter of policy, in the planning and execution of infrastructure projects carried out in their territories.

3. That governments recognize and support advances made under existing initiatives involving critical infrastructure or resources associated with ICTs.

### APPROPRIATION, INNOVATION, AND INITIATIVE

1. That governments link projects that are designed to integrate ICTs as a means of promoting development and social inclusion with the creation of locally installed capacity<sup>5</sup> that will ensure their efficient and sustainable administration and therefore their appropriation by the community.

2. That a component associated with the generation of local educational content and its storage in a way that includes local availability be included in formal, nonformal, and informal education projects.

3. That in the planning of ICT-related policy, there be improved means of coordination and communication among the various levels of government and the private sector involved in their implementation.

---

<sup>3</sup> Open educational resources (OER) are resources for instruction, learning, and research that reside in the public domain or that have been published under a copyright license that allows other persons to use them freely or for purposes other than those envisioned by their author. Three types of resources are identified: educational content, tools, and means of implementation.

<sup>4</sup> "Governance" is a recent concept referring to the efficacy, quality, and proper orientation of state intervention, from which the state derives a large part of its legitimacy, sometimes called a "new way of governing."

<sup>5</sup> We should observe, simultaneously, factors involving the development of human capacities (technological literacy) with which to use ICTs, the definition of technology and infrastructure requirements to support the initiatives, and those related to government policies that make their implementation feasible.

#### **IV. “THE ROAD TO CARTAGENA: HEMISPHERIC COOPERATION TO STRENGTHEN SECURITY”**

**Washington, DC, February 9, 2012**

We, as social actors of the Americas, committed to the historic responsibility of defending the inter-American system and its institutions in the context of regional security, consider it to be vitally important that the Summit of the Americas:

Ratify support for the institutions and bodies of the inter-American system and validate their resolutions in each of the areas.

Reaffirm the institutional framework of the American Convention on Human Rights, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Sixth Summit of the Americas, the General Assembly sessions, and all the resolutions arising from them and from the meetings of heads of state as essential elements in building strategies to prevent crime, supporting security with democratic principles, and the sovereignty of our nations.

Call for continued work, in the framework of public international law, to promote peace, coexistence, and human development so the citizens of the Americas may live peacefully with each other and the rest of the world.

On that basis, we representatives of civil society in the Americas recommend to the plenary session of the Sixth Summit of the Americas certain elements we consider necessary in the context of respect for the Democratic Charter adopted by the member states, for international humanitarian and human rights law, and for the legitimate need of our countries for security and coexistence, in accordance with the five pillars of the Plan of Action on Citizen Security now under discussion by the OAS member states:

##### PUBLIC SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

1. Implement citizen security policies based on appropriate diagnostic studies, with periodic evaluation of their implementation and with a gender perspective.
2. Include the legislatures in the definition and control of policy implementation.
3. Strengthen civilian control over public security; armed forces should intervene only under exceptional circumstances.
4. Provide sustainable resources for programs to prevent and reduce violence.
5. Design and implement social rehabilitation policies for persons who are serving prison sentences.
6. Ensure that the entire state, not only its armed forces, is present throughout the national territory.
7. Specialized training, according to population sector, of law enforcement and justice system operators to respect human rights.
8. Guarantee accountability and transparency in justice and penitentiary systems.
9. Develop fiscal policies to encourage private entities to assist in safeguarding public security.
10. Incorporate international human rights standards in the design and implementation of hemispheric citizen security policies.

### POLICE ADMINISTRATION

1. Study the viability of implementing proximity policing models (community policing or a similar model).
2. Regulation, training, and monitoring to ensure that the use of force by law enforcement officers is consistent with international human rights standards.

### INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

1. Invite those states that have not yet done so to accede to and ratify the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the inter-American conventions on security.
2. Abide strictly by the standards enshrined in the international conventions and instruments on security.
3. Urge the states to support the process of the United Nations convention on the arms trade.
4. Engage civil society participation in the Observatory on Citizen Security, ensuring consideration of the parallel reports it promotes.
5. Encourage increased coordination and communication among the various OAS departments on security matters.
6. Proceed with building an inter-American security system by instituting a permanent rapporteurship on citizen security at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.
7. Guide international cooperation on integrated border development.
8. Promote evaluation of citizen security approaches in a context of sharing best practices.
9. Promote OAS coordination with the sub-regional systems on security matters.
10. Ensure sustainable, permanent funding of civil society efforts.

### CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

1. Promote mechanisms that empower citizens to demand government accountability for the use of resources allocated to for security.
2. Foster civil society participation in open political debates on the formulation of government policy on citizen security.
3. Develop and support research, based on evidence and geared toward action, which will facilitate promotion, awareness, and formulation of government policies.
4. Guarantee that member states include the population, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or economic or social status, in the formulation and development of citizen security policies, both general and specific.

### POLICIES FOR YOUTH AND WOMEN

1. Invite the states that have not yet done so to accede to and ratify the Ibero-American Convention on the Rights of Youth and to enact its provisions through their legislation, so as to safeguard the rights of young women and men.
2. Strengthen the role of women in community affairs.
3. Foster government compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
4. Urge government to establish standard indicators to assess the impact of violence on the lives of women and girls.

**V. III INTER-AMERICAN AFRO-DESCENDANT FORUM: “AFRO-DESCANDANTS’ PARTICIPATION AND ADVOCACY IN THE VI SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS CONECTING THE AMERICAS: PARTNERS FOR PROSPERITY”  
Bogotá, Colombia March 12, 2012**

On March 12, 2012, 42 representatives of Afro-Colombian organizations and members of Afro-descendant networks from throughout the Latin American and Caribbean region gathered in Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia to participate in the forum: “Afro-descendants’ Participation and Advocacy in the VI Summit of the Americas: Connecting the Americas: Partners for Prosperity,” an event organized by Global Rights – Partners for Justice and the Afro-Colombian organizations the Asociacion Nacional de Afrocolombianos Desplazados (AFRODES), Afroamerica XXI Capitulo Colombia, and the Proceso de Comunidades Negras (PCN), with the support of the Summits of the Americas Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Foundation.

CONSIDERING that the States of the Americas, based on the Santiago de Chile Declaration and Action Plan of 2000 drafted in preparation for the World Conference Against Racism celebrated in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, have declared a battle against racism and racial discrimination;

RECALLING the commitment made by the States of the hemisphere in the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which declares that racism and racial and ethnic discrimination are obstacles to democracy and the development of the peoples of the Americas;

AWARE of the commitment made by the States during the IV Summit of the Americas (Mar del Plata) in search of equal opportunity in employment, as well as their commitment to combat discrimination in the labor market and to improve access to education for Afro-descendants;

PLEASED with the activities undertaken by the OAS, the United Nations, and Civil Society during the 2011 International Year of the Peoples of African Descent, including: the 1<sup>st</sup> World Summit of African Descendants celebrated in La Ceiba, Honduras; the Regional Conference on People of African Descent in the Americas, organized by Global Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Washington, D.C.; the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Afro-Descendants and Revolutionary Transformations in Latin America, celebrated in Caracas, Venezuela; the World Summit of Afro-Descendant Youth, celebrated in San Jose, Costa Rica; Afro XXI: Ibero-American Summit for the Year of the Peoples of African Descent, celebrated in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil; and the Meeting of the African Family, celebrated in Cali, Colombia, amongst others;

AWARE of the work being done by the OAS Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs and its Working Group in charge of drafting the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Related Forms of Intolerance, as well as the work of the OAS Department of International Law;

CONSIDERING that Afro-descendant women and girls continue to suffer from triple-discrimination because of their condition as female, Afro-descendant, and poor, and that despite the advances achieved regarding public policies and equal social development for women and girls, such steps have not led to significant benefits for the Afro-descendant women of Latin America;

WORRIED about the member states' lack of compliance with mandates from past Summits;

DISMAYED by the conditions of poverty and inequality confronted by Afro-descendant communities and peoples and indigenous peoples;

WORRIED about the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on Afro-descendant populations, who have seen themselves forced into situations of displacement, confinement, and abandonment of their ancestral territories;

COMMITTED to actively contribute to the strengthening of the work of the OAS in the battle against racism, racial discrimination and intolerance in the hemisphere;

AWARE that it is the role of the States themselves to participate in the Discussion and Approval Process of the official document of the VI Summit, we would like to take the opportunity to make the following recommendations:

1. That the States implement a specialized Afro-descendant approach in their development plans and public policies, including affirmative action policies and policies with a focus on Afro-descendant women, in order to counteract the racial discrimination and economic inequality which exists between Afro-descendant communities and other populations in the region.
2. That the OAS member states continue to include the Afro-descendant variable in their censuses, household surveys and any other public or private information-gathering activities, with the aim of not only knowing how many of us there are, but also to better understand the socioeconomic conditions in which we live and what steps to take to improve these conditions.
3. We call upon the region's States to fulfill the recommendations set forth in the report published in January, 2012 by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, titled: "The Situation of People of African Descent in the Americas."
4. That the member states implement the recommendations set forth in the above-mentioned Summits, including the Action Plan of the 1st World Summit of People of African Descent celebrated in La Ceiba, Honduras, and the 2011 Action Plan of the Organización Negra Centroamericana (ONECA).
5. That the member states accelerate the discussion process for the Draft Inter-American Convention Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Related Forms of Intolerance, currently under negotiation before the OAS Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs.
6. That the member states undertake the commitment to support the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' Special Rapporteur on the Rights on Afro-descendants and against Racial Discrimination.
7. That the member states cease all actions of denationalization and the abnegation of previously established rights through the retroactive application of laws to the detriment of Afro-descendant populations.

8. To adopt urgent measures and affirmative actions to eradicate poverty, racism, and racial discrimination against Afro-descendant women, to promote their engagement in decision-making processes, and to increase their participation in elected bodies and other public positions of authority at the local and national levels.
9. That the member states ratify UN Resolution A/66/460 on the Decade of the Peoples of African Descent.

Signed by representatives of the following organizations:

Colombia: Asociación Nacional de Afrocolombianos Desplazados (AFRODES); Asociación de Mujeres Afrocolombianas (AMUAFROC); AFROAMERICA XXI Capitulo Colombia; Conferencia Nacional Afrocolombiana (CNOA); Colectivo de Estudiantes Universitarios Afrocolombianos (CEUNA); Movimiento Nacional CIMARRON; Proceso de Comunidades Negras (PCN).

Regional Networks: Articulación de ONGs de Mujeres Negras Brasileñas (AMNB); Red de Mujeres Afrolatinoamericanas, Caribeñas y de la Diáspora; Organización Negra Centroamericana (ONECA); Red de Encuentro Dominicano Haitiano Jacques Viau; AFROAMERICA XXI Plataforma continental.

**VI. PRIVATE SECTOR DIALOGUE “CONNECTING BUSINESSES, CONNECTING PEOPLE IN THE AMERICAS”  
Washington, DC, March 13, 2012**

This document presents the recommendations from the OAS Private Sector Dialogue, which was held on March 13, 2012 in Washington, D.C. ([www.oas.org/psf](http://www.oas.org/psf)). “Connecting Businesses, Connecting People in the Americas” was the theme of the Dialogue. Representatives of the various private sector organizations of the hemisphere and numerous business leaders participated directly in the Dialogue, giving their views on each of the issues of the event. The Dialogue was followed by many business persons and government officials of the hemisphere over the Internet and the social networks, generating more than 55,000 visits. It should be noted that in addition to the Dialogue itself and the virtual following it generated, the findings of the OAS private sector survey, which was conducted in preparation for the VI Summit of the Americas in Cartagena, Colombia, were presented at the Dialogue (See Annex).

The principal recommendations on each of the issues of the Dialogue are as follows, for consideration by the Heads of State and Government at the upcoming VI Summit:

HUMAN CAPITAL

Invest in human capital and provide high-quality education, to develop the skills necessary to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

Strengthen public-private collaboration to improve opportunities for labor and better conditions for businesses to increase their competitiveness and promote sustainable economic growth.

Facilitate integration of youth into the workforce through internships and on-the-job learning, take advantage of the region’s demographic dividend and further prosperity in the countries of the Americas.

The results of the world survey on labor demand in relation to *Global Talent 2021* were presented by Oxford Economics, and included nine countries of the Americas. The study is producing many useful recommendations for public policy-makers responsible for labor force issues in our countries.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

The requirements for creating, carrying out, and facilitating the management of a business continue to be obstacles for the private sector in the region and a disincentive for entrepreneurship and formality.

Governments should promote reforms that create an enabling environment for private sector development, streamlining business regulations that mostly affect micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

Governments should promote a business environment that facilitates access to credit for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, using a market (and not welfare) approach, to lift the bottom of the pyramid out of poverty.

Investing more and better in research and development and producing an environment conducive to innovation and enterprise are essential for the competitiveness of our countries. Collaboration among public, private, academia and research centers is indispensable. Innovation creates opportunities for investment and trade in high added value products and services and promotes well-paying and stable jobs. Fiscal incentives, intellectual property protection, facilitating the marketing of new technologies, access to financing, and improved connectivity are necessary to strengthen innovation systems.

Collaboration and coordination between the public and private sectors are essential to the development of modern quality infrastructure. Joint action and parallel progress by countries in this area are the only way to create a competitive region.

Emphasis was placed on the concept of sustainable competitiveness, geared toward inclusive economic and social development that is balanced, and fully respectful of the environment.

Businesses must make corporate social responsibility an integral part of their business strategy, creating sustainable prosperity. Governments in the region should promote and foster greater corporate social responsibility.

Take advantage of business opportunities generated by expanding access to credit and capital for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.

#### CITIZEN SECURITY

Through its corporate social responsibility programs, the private sector is capable of working with governments to implement initiatives for vocational training, job promotion, and a culture of peace and prevention, which reduce unemployment and offers alternative opportunities for young people to occupy free time.

Governments should provide greater space for the private sector to participate actively in the construction of public policy, particularly in the area of elaboration of legislation on money laundering, the admissibility of evidence, and cyber crime.

Notwithstanding that they may pose a challenge for businesses, public-private partnerships on the reintegration of ex-convicts and ex-combatants should be continued. A good alternative would be to support the creation of microenterprises and cooperatives by ex- criminals and ex-combatants. The private sector could buy products and services from these enterprises and thereby offer indirect employment.

#### INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY, AND CONNECTIVITY

A universally available information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, including mobile broadband and cloud computing, is essential to future economic and social success in the Americas, including its smallest economies. Adopting global technology standards, including spectrum plans that improve regional harmonization, will increase competition and reduce costs.

Governments will have to reconsider public policies that diminish the benefits of the new ICT infrastructure, the “new services and knowledge technology,” *inter alia*:

- Put an end to regulatory and licensing barriers to new information services and applications;
- Harmonize banking and telecommunications regulations to enable mobile banking;
- Create rules and adapt medical systems to promote mobile health innovations;
- Foster the adoption of ICT solutions to modernize schools and workforce skills training;
- Eliminate policy barriers to employee-led innovation and crowd sourcing to fuel innovation on a lifetime basis.

Remove policies and practices that limit the entry of small and medium-sized enterprises into the formal economy. When they join the formal economy, they can invest more effectively in ICT tools and in worker skills;

Remove policies practices that limit the creation of social enterprises that use private capital but pursue social objectives rather than the maximization of profits for shareholders.

Enable cloud computing to operate on a cross-border basis to allow countries to benefit fully from the rapid evolution of the global division of labor, including regional production and innovation systems Adopt national policies on data security and protection of privacy that are least restrictive on cross-border cloud systems and allow continuing industry-led innovation.

Work in partnership with other governments, business,, and civil society to establish compatible national expectations concerning privacy and security.

#### PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

There is consensus on the importance of fostering public-private alliances to achieve sustainable social development.

One example of an initiative by socially responsible businesses to promote inclusion is “reverse trade fairs;” i.e., large enterprises buying from small ones. Private-private and public-public alliances generate public-private alliances.

The private sector has to learn not to engage in protesting without proposing.

A proposal for a decade of action was put forth.

Mention was made of the CEATAL Declaration to the XVII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor, held on October 30 and November 1, 2011, in San Salvador, which emphasized the commitment to freedom and democracy, the necessary environment for sustainable enterprises, youth employment as a priority, education, training, and lifelong learning, the informal economy as an obstacle to development, and social and national dialogue. Reference was also made to the Joint Declaration of COSATE and CEATAL on Youth and Decent Work.

The Americas Competitiveness Forum that will be held in Cali, Colombia on October 24-26, 2012, and the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC) were noted as effective mechanisms for dialogue between the public and private sectors, the exchange of experiences among countries and institutions, and joint initiatives.

**VII. DRAFT DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE AMERICAS**  
**“YOUTH: PARTNERS FOR PROSPERITY”**  
**June 2011 – March 2012**

*Drafted by the young people of the Americas participating in the National and Virtual Dialogues as part of the process of the Third Young Americas Forum, to be held in Cartagena, Colombia from April 10-13, 2012 in the framework of the Sixth Summit of the Americas.*

**Preamble**

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION that between June 2011 and March 2012, we the young citizens of the countries of the Americas, have organized ourselves and participated through formal and official channels of the participation process towards the Third Young Americas Forum facilitated by the Young Americas Business Trust, the OAS, the Summit of the Americas Secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, thereby strengthening our involvement as a Social Actor at the VI Summit of the Americas. We focus our contributions on four sub-topics of the Sixth Summit of the Americas: Poverty and Inequality, Citizen Security, Natural Disasters and Access to Technology.

RECALLING that in the Youth Declaration of Port-of-Spain, adopted and presented to the Ministers of External Relations at the Fifth Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago in April 2009, we the young people committed ourselves to participate actively in the process of the Summits of the Americas.

RECALLING that the Declaration of Medellin: YOUTH AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES (AG/DEC. 57, XXXVIII-O/08) recognizes:

The importance of youth participation in political activities and public life, including electoral processes, as a key aspect in the promotion and exercise of a democratic culture;

The importance that youth should be able to select their training and education on the basis of their fundamental freedoms;

That the full application of democracy, respect for and protection and promotion of human rights, and recognition that human beings are the focal point of integral development, are essential for the improvement of social conditions and the eradication of poverty;

That democracy and social and economic development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing;

That the conditions of poverty, social exclusion, and vulnerability faced by large numbers of young people in the hemisphere can affect their development for the rest of their lives;

That poverty and social exclusion constitute obstacles faced by a large number of young people in the hemisphere. Therefore, economic and social development offering equal opportunities, justice, and social inclusion are essential for the dignity of human beings;

That there are a large number of youth who neither study nor work, that very often the jobs they do find are insecure, and that high levels of youth unemployment are problematic and enhance their vulnerable situation in society;

RECALLING that in the Declaration of the Fourth Summit of the Americas held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in November 2005, Heads of State and Government recognized the importance of facilitating the integration of young people into the labor market, extending the availability and improving the quality of information services and career counseling, as well as the importance of creating opportunities to facilitate their access to decent work, and that in the Plan of Action of the Summit they committed to reduce youth unemployment and significantly lower the percentage of young people who neither study nor work;

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION that we participated in hemispheric, national and local dialogues to discuss, exchange ideas and learn in depth about projects and activities that young people are implementing and leading in the hemisphere. More than 30 dialogues were held including in Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. These were organized and facilitated by ourselves, and involved around 3,500 young people from throughout the region. We would like to highlight the Hemispheric Dialogues held in San Salvador - El Salvador, Asuncion - Paraguay and Colonia, Uruguay, as well as the Virtual Dialogue "Ideas of Impact: Young People's innovations and contributions to the Sixth Summit of the Americas," which was joined by 475 online members and received 205 inputs and 3367 visits during the two months that it was open;

The young people of the Americas:

1. Propose to present the concrete actions and projects that young people are already implementing as leaders and economic and social entrepreneurs within our communities through the channels provided prior to the VI Summit of the Americas. We highlight our initiatives with the aim to inspire our governments with our enthusiasm and creativity. Above all, we seek that our proposals be considered in the design and implementation of public policies, development plans, and strategies for implementing the mandates of the VI Summit, and be seen as sources of energy, innovation, and ideas.
2. Ask to be identified as Partners for Prosperity, rightful citizens, and strategic actors for development. Young people are committed to play an active role in the formulation of public policies and programs; to share the ideas, innovations, and projects that we are leading, to serve as an inspiration to the international community. We encourage our governments to partner with us in the development, growth, success and impact of our social and economic projects.
3. Present youth entrepreneurship as an essential tool to economic and social development, to combat poverty, unemployment, and social economic insecurity; hence we encourage our government to support and invest in programs that support young entrepreneurs.
4. Request more incentives from the member institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group and governments, to support organizations that work on youth issues, environment, natural disasters, education, poverty, land ownership issues, and technology based entrepreneurship among other issues, through programs that monitor the implementation of the commitments that resulted from the Summits of the America.

5. Believe that there is a chance to improve the world, that young people are capable to positively transform their lives and surroundings. We are not a problem (or victims), we share and experience the same conditions of structural poverty and discrimination as the entire community, sometimes more deeply.
6. Propose to the OAS, to work in partnership with community and youth control groups to support and monitor the proposals contained herein, and that together we can urge the Heads of States and Governments and their administrative structures to continue to develop proposals jointly to overcome the situation of many young people, and the discrimination, stigmatization at the hands of the institutions.
7. Propose to the member states to create and strengthen national and local youth organizations, and specialized youth programs to promote participation, advocacy and partnerships among youth, developing national information system to collect and share information that allows formulation, implementation, participatory monitoring and evaluation of public policies that address comprehensive youth realities and the needs of young people of the Americas, allocating sufficient resources for those purposes.
8. Strongly suggest that each of these contributions be incorporated in the national and local legislative policies in our countries based on a diversified approach, recognizing the multiple forms and shapes of young people, the different contexts, ways and barriers in which we carry out our citizenship. For example, gender, ethnicity, age, special circumstances in rural areas, disability and armed conflict must be taken into account to guarantee our rights.
9. Request our Governments to take the following recommendations into consideration during the meetings and negotiation process of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG):

#### POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

1. To guarantee the adoption of regulatory and administrative policies to ensure that young people have access to a comprehensive, continuous, relevant and quality higher education, promoting the use of new technologies and fostering in students the respect for difference, gender equality and cultural diversity. It is imperative to increase investment in infrastructure, equipment, access to technology, training opportunities for the teachers and content adjustment in education. Educational systems should seek a comprehensive training and the quality of the student, generating critical and reflective citizens, committed to their surroundings, for the present and the future of society in which they are embedded.
2. To execute a supranational strategy for regulating the supply and demand for youth employment in addition to entrepreneurship, including the implementation of programs of technical and financial cooperation to promote decent work by stimulating the adoption of regulatory frameworks in line with the challenges posed by the global economy and new sources of employment, development and accessibility of appropriate job information and the creation or strengthening of public employment services.
3. To implement self-employment and entrepreneurship programs for young people, providing funds for the startup capital needed to start new companies, encouraging the

private sector to contribute through technical and financial assistance initiatives under its social responsibility, and supporting initiatives to generate income and new employment in non-conventional sectors.

4. To set up, in cooperation with regional and international organizations, business development training programs for youth, establishing centers where young people can design and test their entrepreneurial initiatives.
5. To guarantee training and youth involvement in job opportunities in technology-based sectors, encouraging the adoption of flexible criteria for work-study programs.
6. To promote employment of young women, young people with disabilities, youth returning from military service, migrants, refugees, displaced and indigenous youth as well as other populations through a differentiated approach by allocating funds to support the initiatives coming from these groups.
7. To provide incentives and support educational and cultural policies to make rural areas more attractive to young people. Likewise, with the cooperation of youth organizations, organize cultural activities to promote meetings and exchange opportunities between rural and urban youth, in order to create awareness of existing state policies and cooperation programs of rural development.
8. To endorse the adoption of regulatory and administrative measures to give young people the opportunity to increase their employment skills, by offering technical and vocational training to ensure a successful transition from education to work and to fit the changes in demand for labor in their respective sectors.
9. To implement training programs for young leaders, including the exchange of ideas and experiences in generating businesses and innovation, between young people in developed and developing countries, through meetings, internships and volunteering.
10. To prepare training programs with the cooperation of youth organizations, for young people aimed at improving the systems of agricultural production and marketing, based on economic needs of rural areas and the needs of the young people living in these areas with a goal of production development and achieving food security.
11. To identify and implement successful experiences with land donation programs accompanied by financial, technical assistance and training of young people and youth organizations.
12. To establish a joint agenda with international organizations and voluntary youth organizations to implement projects, and preserve and improve the environment.

#### CITIZEN SECURITY

13. To stimulate Ministries of Education of each country, to design a national dialogue on citizen intelligence that is youth led and may be adapted to the interests and dynamics of each territory; however, it should be directed towards the promotion of active participation, solidarity and social control.

14. To implement actions by all institutions, public and private organizations to encourage the appropriate use of public spaces and common areas, promoting the proper use, enjoyment and protection of these spaces.
15. To request the Ministries of Defense, especially their military and public forces to share information on how to stop and eliminate the progressive network of transnational organized crime (which incorporates mostly young people), by developing profile studies on the phenomenon and its reach throughout the region.
16. To encourage all non-governmental and social organizations, public and private institutions, to design collective mechanisms to stop forced recruitment of children, adolescents and youth in armed groups, gangs, organized crime, gang-related criminal human trafficking, narcotraffic, robbery, and smuggling.
17. To establish mechanisms to monitor trade and industrial sectors to eradicate all forms of labor exploitation, developing relevant regulations and setting standards for the promotion of employment and the acquisition of first job work experiences through internships and professional practices.
18. To convoke public and private sector institutions, international agencies, universities, research institutes, social and youth organizations to build a horizontal and collaborative information platform that allows the development of programs and initiatives, and through research, develop proposals and articulate actions to support young people in issues related to citizen security.
19. To propose to the international community to work together, coexist and promote a culture of peace, and recognize the important role youth can play in building security.
20. To invite the governments to ratify the Ibero-American Youth Rights Convention and to implement through legislation the provisions contained therein, to ensure the rights of young people.

#### NATURAL DISASTERS

21. To request the governments and institutions that participated in the VI Summit of the Americas to educate different communities in disaster prevention, taking into account the local risks faced by each population. This training should focus on promoting a resilient and preventive culture, adjusted to each type of community and going from the local to the international perspective, as well as taking into account that political barriers do not affect shared risk and that joint actions can be undertaken.
22. To minimize the environmental factors that increase vulnerabilities and threats in the context of risk reduction, governments likewise should: ensure the recovery and rehabilitation of ecosystems which are strategically influential in reducing risk and ensure proper use of the territory.
23. To request adequate resources for the relocation, adaptation and rehabilitation of people affected by natural disasters, we must link the Governments, the Joint Summit Working Group and other relevant organizations, incorporating youth organizations in monitoring, oversight and enforcing control in social programs.

24. To make sure governments regulate national and international industrial employers to comply with the concept of “extended product responsibility”, denoting the importance of accountability from the moment they acquire raw materials until their final disposal, since the use of low-cost raw materials and solid waste often increases the level of environmental threats to populations, also increasing the level of risk, ensuring a viable market for recycling and reuse to support the chain of production and the better use of natural resources as a preventive method for natural disasters.
25. To claim that it is the responsibility of governments to protect their populations and ensure the appropriate use of land at the time of awarding concessions, permits or licenses by local authorities, to ensure the compliance of impartial and objective national regulations, ensuring land management and land use.
26. To urge member states to take control of serious and strict processes of exploitation of natural resources, while promoting an alternative for generation of renewable energy sources, and the implementation of cleaner and sustainable production processes.
27. To enforce existing environmental treaties, and the creation of new norms that guarantee the full protection of the regional environment through international standards, ensuring the region’s biodiversity, a key component to environmental balance and disaster prevention.
28. To communicate to young people in a comprehensive, timely, and understandable language, and with understandable, reliable indicators that reflect reality and facilitate public confidence in national and international policies, to see environmental issues as an opportunity for prosperity rather than an additional burden for development.

#### ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY

29. Develop the region as a digital hub that promotes young people’s entrepreneurial initiatives related to information technology and communications in order to consolidate the region as a center of technological innovation.
30. To implement a supranational strategy for increasing the access of young people to information technology and communications, including the implementation of technical and financial cooperation programs that ensure that young people have access to computers; increase coverage of broadband networks, free public networks, together with a strategy specifically targeted for youth in rural communities.
31. To offer technological education to ensure digital literacy for everyone, especially digital inclusion for those in vulnerable situations.
32. To create recognition programs among regional institutions, to create new and better online training programs at all educational levels to promote greater access to education for young people, using TICs as learning tools.
33. To strengthen virtual communities of young people to highlight their successful experiences using TICs and to function as collective constructive laboratories to evaluate models, propose and monitor applications to generate dynamic community innovations through networking.

34. To generate digital networks for content development and for the dynamic preservation of historical, social, and cultural memory for communities.
35. To create digital information systems for young people in all countries of the region to be used, consulted, built and managed between the institutions responsible for consolidating statistical information, institutions that address themes of youth, and the youth networks themselves, in order to stimulate the dynamics of open government that facilitate their participation in the formulation and implementation of public policies.
36. To apply public policies in the region, related to the protection of user data, the proper use of Internet and digital identity, especially as it relates to the prevention of bullying and other crimes related to the protection of minors.
37. To implement a supranational strategy for all countries in the region to ensure access to the Internet as a human right, bringing the constitutional right to connectivity, information, communication and knowledge and freedom of online speech.
38. To establish an annual meeting of digital democracy focused on the consolidation of democracy through citizen based actions in communications, and organized by youth networks in the Americas with the support of governments and institutions and with the technical cooperation of organizations and private companies. To promote consolidation of democracy in the Americas through the participation of the newly interconnected citizens.