

**Inter-American Social Protection Network Ceremony**  
remarks delivered by  
**Ambassador Carmen Lomellin, US Permanent Representative to the OAS**

- Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza, Assistant Secretary General Albert Ramdin, Ambassador Bayney Karran - Chair of the Permanent Council, fellow Ambassadors, Permanent Observers, and invited guests:
- I want to extend to you a very warm welcome, and thank you for joining in this ceremony to reaffirm the U.S. commitment and support for the Inter-American Social Protection Network.
- The Inter-American Social Protection Network illustrates the kind of relationship the United States is committed to maintaining with our neighbors in the Hemisphere –a relationship that is based on mutual respect, equality, shared responsibility, and collaboration to address common problems.
- Along with other leaders in our Hemisphere, President Obama pledged to support the Network at the Fifth Summit of the Americas. U.S. Secretary of State Clinton joined the former president of Chile and Colombia along with national and local government officials, Secretary General Insulza, heads of other international organizations, and representatives from the private sector, academia and civil society in launching the Network in 2009 in New York City.
- After three successful years of establishing a strategic orientation and validating its objectives, the Network has matured and now aims to broaden the space of engagement and cooperation, facilitate exchange, and promote the sharing of innovative practices in social protection among countries.
- Secretary General Insulza, on that note and on behalf of the United States government, President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, I hereby present to the OAS, a grant totaling **\$1.73 million dollars** to support the Network’s future activities.
- As we enter this second phase of the Inter-American Social Protection Network, it is important to view this Network as a valuable tool for all members of the inter-American system, including governments, institutions, and civil society and urge all to contribute to making the IASPN a long term success.
- We think the OAS role as coordinator for the Network has been valuable. We also want to express our appreciation for the contributions of the other international organizations that are members of the Joint Summit Working Group and the many other partner organizations that have been working with the network. We would like to encourage the OAS and all institutions to share their expertise and contribute to strengthening this initiative.
- We particularly want to emphasize the importance of civil society in the success of the Network. Some of the best innovations in social protection are happening at the grass-roots level, and these experiences are integral part in strengthening the process.
- Again, thank you all for joining us at this ceremony. I look forward to witnessing the long-term success of this social protection network in combating poverty and providing a better future for the people of our hemisphere.