



Organization of
American States



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP (SIRG)
Third Meeting of Plenipotentiary Officials of 2009
April 15, 2009
Festival Ballroom
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago

OEA/Ser.E
GRIC/OP.3/doc.6/09
16 April 2009
Original: English

REPORT OF THE MEETING

1. PREPARATIONS

At the second meeting of plenipotentiary officials of 2009, which was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, the Chair, Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, National Coordinator and Special Envoy for the Americas of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, indicated to Member States that this would be the last session of the SIRG and that he hoped that the negotiations would be completed. At this time, he commended the delegates for their progress and indicated that although it had been trying and frustrating he was pleased that they were able to find ways to resolve their differences. He indicated however that a few issues in the Declaration which remained pending were the basis of the convening of the Third Meeting of Plenipotentiary Officials of 2009.

On April 14, 2009, the most recent revision of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain (CEPCA/doc.3/09) was circulated to all National Coordinators, and Permanent Missions after the Style Committee finished its work.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Chair, Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, welcomed the participants to Trinidad and Tobago. He stated that this was the Third Meeting of Plenipotentiary Officials of 2009 and expressed his hope of addressing final matters in order to finish the Declaration. He then presented the meeting's draft agenda (GRIC/OP.3/doc.1/09) for the consideration of the delegates. There being no objections or amendments to the agenda, it was approved.

3. FIRST PLENARY SESSION

- a) Remarks by Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, National Coordinator and Special Envoy to the Americas and Chair of the SIRG

At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair indicated that the meeting would start with a slight delay because countries needed some time for consultations to address a few matters.

The chair referred to the achievements of the Style Committee established to harmonize the documents in all four languages and expressed his special thanks to Mr. Bernardo Cordoba, Deputy National Coordinator of Mexico for the Summits of the Americas Process, for accepting the position of the general coordinator of this Committee. The Chair also reminded the meeting that on March 26 and 27, 2009, the Style Committee began its work, and completed all paragraphs during its third session on April 14, 2009. He also thanked the other members of the Style Committee for their efforts in getting the work done expeditiously. He then offered the floor to the Chair of the Style Committee to brief the delegates on the progress of negotiations so far.

b) Remarks by Mr. Bernardo Cordoba, Deputy National Coordinator of Mexico and Chair of the Style Committee

The Representative of Mexico and General Coordinator of the Style Committee expressed his gratitude to Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez for having chosen his country to chair the Style Committee established to harmonize in all the official languages, the Declaration of Commitment of the Fifth Summit of the Americas. He stated that the meeting was led in a very friendly environment because of the great spirit of cooperation of each and every delegation and especially because of the extensive support provided by the National Secretariat and the OAS Secretariat.

He also expressed his special thanks to the delegations of Brazil, Canada, Colombia and Jamaica for their support in the committee. He also stated that the work proposed by the Style Committee was well accomplished.

c) Comments by Member States

Chair of the SIRG

Following Mr. Cordoba's remarks, the Chair of the SIRG Ambassador Rodriguez reiterated the Methodology that was adopted at the Committee and indicated that this exercise was essential to finalize the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain. He also mentioned that consensus had been reached on all paragraphs, and then opened the floor for the delegations to make their comments.

Canada

The Canadian Representative indicated that like her delegation, many others have waited for this moment to finalize the Declaration that was scheduled to be signed during the Summit, and she emphasized the common will of all delegations to reach consensus on key issues addressing their citizens.

Bolivia

The representative of Bolivia reiterated that he could not join the consensus because of the biofuels question, and presented a note containing the following reservation prepared by his country.

“Concerning the scope of paragraph 33 on the potential of new, emerging, and environmentally friendly technologies for diversifying the energy matrix, Bolivia's position on the action to encourage sustainable development, production and use of biofuels contravenes the objective of seeking new or alternative sources of energy as no information

is available to prove that the production and use of biofuels would be harmless and safe. Nor is there any information to suggest that they would have far-reaching impacts on the sustainable development, the human development, and the social and economic development of our peoples:

Bolivia is of the view that development of cooperative policies and arrangements intended to expand biofuels in the Western Hemisphere can adversely affect and impact the availability of foods and raise food prices, increase deforestation, displace populations due to the demand for land, and ultimately aggravate the food crisis. It would directly affect low-income persons, especially the poorest economies of the developing countries. Thus, while the Bolivian Government recognizes the need to find and use alternative, nature-friendly sources of energy, such as geothermal, solar, wind energy and the small- and medium-sized hydroelectric plants, it suggests an alternative view based on living well and in harmony with nature, developing public policies aimed to promote safe, alternative energies that guarantee the preservation of the planet, our 'Mother Earth'."

In addition, he stressed that the idea was not to confront the governments of Brazil or the United States on reaching consensus on this topic, but in light of the period of transition Bolivia was going through, it could not go along with the consensus.

Nicaragua

The representative of Nicaragua stated that throughout the entire discussion of the Declaration of Commitment, his country had expressed reservations regarding certain essential elements. As noted previously by many other delegations, Nicaragua also believed that this was a historical Summit that would make a difference in the Hemisphere. He said that small countries had been the most severely affected by the financial and environmental crisis and that although that fact was emphasized several times during the negotiations, the Declaration document did not reflect those real problems facing the world at this time. He also emphasized the excellent work of Trinidad and Tobago in beginning this dialogue in the Hemisphere and said that the reality of the Summit was already on a trajectory that was not reflected in the document to be signed by the Heads of State. Consequently, Nicaragua's position was to maintain its reservation because those basic issues were not addressed in the document.

Venezuela

The representative of Venezuela agreed with the delegation of Nicaragua that the Trinidad Summit was a historical summit. He said that many things had changed in the Hemisphere in the period between the Fourth and Fifth Summits of the Americas, in that the Americas had undergone great transformations. He also noted that the question of the financial crisis was not reflected in the Declaration, even though it was a very serious topic that was currently affecting the countries. In that regard, he supported the position of Nicaragua.

Belize

On behalf of CARICOM, the representative of Belize congratulated the National Secretariat for the tremendous work they did for the Summit process and for the Hemisphere.

Chair of the SIRG

The chair acknowledged the comments of all delegations and thanked those who recognized the work done by Trinidad and Tobago. He stated that the document did not intend to address all the problems because it would have been an impossible task, and he emphasized that they have achieved a document that they can work with and which represents the collective wishes. He concluded by stating that this may not be the perfect document but it is the result of the most extensive consultations and reflects the wishes of each and every delegation.

Brazil

The Government of Brazil considered the document to be extremely satisfactory, in that it sought to accommodate the interests of all the parties. Brazil regretted that the delegation of Bolivia had said it was unable to join the consensus on paragraph 33, which dealt with biofuels. In fact, many delegations believed that the document reflected the collective will, wherein everyone had made concessions.

United States

The National Coordinator for the Summits of the Americas Process of the United States affirmed that the Declaration is a document that tries to bring together the 34 countries in a spirit of consensus. He further indicated that his president would be attending the Summit in a spirit of dialogue and listening; and that the Heads of State and Government would contribute to the success of the event if they all came in a spirit of partnership.

Chair of the SIRG

Considering that there were no more requests for the floor the Chair concluded the meeting by recognizing the comments made by the delegations. He reiterated that the Declaration was not perfect but it was the voice of the Hemisphere.

Finally, the Chair thanked the delegates for their efforts and indicated that he was sure they were going to have a very successful Summit. Before closing the meeting the Chair responded to some logistical questions presented by several delegations. He also provided some additional information on some of the summit events.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.00 p.m.