

AG/RES. 2519 (XXXIX-O/09)

INCREASING AND STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION
IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
AND IN THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS PROCESS

(Adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 4, 2009)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN the Annual Report of the Permanent Council to the General Assembly (AG/doc.../09), as it pertains to the activities of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities (CISC);

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT resolution AG/RES.. 2395 (XXXVIII-O/08), “Increasing and Strengthening Civil Society Participation in the Activities of the Organization of American States and in the Summits of the Americas Process”;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ALSO that 2009 marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Guidelines for Participation by Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities, adopted by the Permanent Council in resolution CP/RES. 759 (1217/99) and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution AG/RES.. 1707 (XXX-O/00), which state that, “[i]n order to bear fruit, civil society participation must be oriented by a clear and yet flexible regulatory framework. Such flexibility is achieved by way of periodic review of participation in OAS activities. These Guidelines thus represent a further step toward enhancing civil society participation in OAS activities”;

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION the “Strategies for Increasing and Strengthening Participation by Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities,” adopted by the Permanent Council in resolution CP/RES. 840 (1361/03) and subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution AG/RES.. 1915 (XXXIII-O/03), which requested “the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities (CISC) to follow up on these strategies; to evaluate their implementation; and, if appropriate, to propose amendments to them or new mechanisms for increasing and strengthening participation by civil society organizations in OAS activities”;

CONSIDERING that the Summits of the Americas process encourages full participation by civil society and that, in the Declaration of Nuevo León, the Heads of State and Government undertook to institutionalize meetings with civil society and with the academic and private sectors; and more recently through resolution AG/RES.. 2315 (XXXVII-O/07), “Participation of Workers’ Representatives in Activities of the Organization of American States,” the Ministers of Foreign Affairs agreed to hold a dialogue with workers’ representatives, recognized as such by virtue of national law or practice, prior to the inaugural sessions of the OAS General Assembly and the Summits of the Americas, so that said representatives may make recommendations and proposals for initiatives related to the theme of the General Assembly or the Summit of the Americas and directed toward the member states and the OAS;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the Declaration of Mar del Plata recognized the pivotal role the Organization of American States (OAS) plays in coordinating civil society participation in the Summits process;

UNDERSCORING that, in paragraph 94 of the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, the Heads of State and Government committed “[...] to continue encouraging the participation of our peoples, through the engagement of our citizens, communities and civil society in the design and execution of development policies and programs, by providing technical and financial assistance, as appropriate, and in accordance with national legislation to strengthen and build their capacity to participate more fully in the inter-American system”;^{46/}

CONSIDERING that Articles 6 and 26 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter state that “[i]t is the right and responsibility of all citizens to participate in decisions relating to their own development. This is a necessary condition for the full and effective exercise of democracy. Promoting and fostering diverse forms of participation strengthens democracy” and that “[t]he OAS will continue to carry out programs and activities designed to promote democratic principles and practices and strengthen a democratic culture in the Hemisphere, bearing in mind that democracy is a way of life based on liberty and enhancement of economic, social, and cultural conditions for the peoples of the Americas. The OAS will consult and cooperate on an ongoing basis with Member States and take into account the contributions of civil society organizations working in those fields”;

NOTING the establishment of the Specific Fund of voluntary contributions to Support the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities and in the Summits of the Americas process, by resolution CP/RES. 864 (1413/04), to support participation by civil society organizations in OAS activities, including the dialogue among heads of delegation of member states, the Secretary General, and civil society organization representatives, which has been included on the draft schedule for regular sessions of the General Assembly as a regular activity before the inaugural session, as indicated in resolution AG/RES.. 1915 (XXXIII-O/03);

NOTING:

The contributions received during the Civil Society Sub-regional Forums held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on October 30 and 31, 2008; San Salvador, El Salvador, on December 8 and 9, 2008; and Lima, Peru, on February 6 and 7, 2009, regarding the theme of the Fifth Summit of the Americas, “Securing Our Citizens’ Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability”;

The recommendations of the Hemispheric Forum with Civil Society, held in Washington, D.C., on March 3 and 4, 2009, on the theme of the thirty-ninth regular session of the OAS General Assembly, “Toward a Culture of Non-Violence,” and the special meeting of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities to strengthen dialogue with civil society held on March 4, 2009; and

46 The Government of Nicaragua wishes to place on record its express reservation to the Declaration of the Fifth Summit of the Americas, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. At that event, Nicaragua expressed its position that it considered the Declaration of the Fifth Summit of the Americas unacceptable and insufficient, since it did not address a series of topics of high importance to the Hemisphere, discussion of which remains pending. Neither does Nicaragua agree to such reference to that Declaration as may be contained in such different resolutions as may be adopted at the regular session of the OAS General Assembly. Nicaragua reaffirms that the items on the agenda for the General Assembly should be prepared based on the debates and discussions of the Heads of State and Government in Trinidad and Tobago.

The Dialogue between Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Social Actors which was held on April 17, 2009 and in which representatives from civil society, workers, indigenous groups, the private sector, and youth participated; and

RECOGNIZING ALSO that civil society participation in OAS activities should take place in a context of close collaboration between the political and institutional bodies of the Organization and in accordance with the provisions of resolution CP/RES. 759 (1217/99), "Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities,"

RESOLVES:

1. To reaffirm the commitment and will of the member states and the Organization to continue strengthening and implementing effective mechanisms and concrete actions for civil society participation in the activities of the Organization of American States (OAS) and in the Summits of the Americas process.

2. To instruct the Permanent Council, the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), and the General Secretariat to continue, in coordination with all organs, agencies, and entities of the OAS, to facilitate the implementation of the Strategies for Increasing and Strengthening Participation by Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities, adopted by the Permanent Council in resolution CP/RES. 840 (1361/03) and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution AG/RES.. 1915 (XXXIII-O/03), "Increasing and Strengthening Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities."

3. To instruct the Permanent Council to continue to promote and facilitate civil society participation in the Summits of the Americas and in the activities developed by the OAS as a result of the Summits of the Americas process, as well as the efforts of member states to foster such participation.

4. To continue to actively support and promote the registration of civil society organizations and their participation in OAS activities, and in its organs, agencies, and entities with the support of the OAS General Secretariat and in accordance with resolution CP/RES. 759 (121/99), "Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities."

5. To encourage all member states, permanent observers, and other donors, as defined in Article 74 of the General Standards to Govern the Operations of the General Secretariat and in other rules and regulations of the Organization, to consider contributing to the Specific Fund to Support the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities and in the Summits of the Americas process, in order to sustain and promote the effective participation of civil society organizations in OAS activities in accordance with the goals set by the OAS General Assembly and by the Heads of State and Government in the Summits of the Americas process, including in the dialogue among heads of delegation, the Secretary General, and representatives of civil society organizations.

6. To continue to urge member states to:

- a. Participate in the dialogue of heads of delegation with representatives of civil society organizations in the context of General Assembly sessions and in the Summits of the Americas process; and

- b. Continue their efforts, both domestically and multilaterally, to expand opportunities for participation by civil society organizations in OAS activities and in the Summits of the Americas process.

7. To encourage member states to continue reporting on existing procedures and regulations regarding consultations with civil society, to allow for an exchange of experiences and best practices among the member states.

8. To recognize the efforts of the host country of the thirty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly to work together with the General Secretariat and with civil society organizations to facilitate and organize their participation in the dialogue of heads of delegation, in accordance with resolution CP/RES. 840 (1361/03); and to encourage future hosts to continue to build on these traditions.

9. To instruct the General Secretariat to continue to support member states that so request in their efforts to increase the institutional capacity of their governments to receive, absorb, and act on civil society input and advocacy.

10. To request the General Secretariat to report to the Permanent Council before the fortieth regular session of the General Assembly on the implementation of this resolution, the execution of which shall be subject to the availability of financial resources in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.