



**SUBREGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM FOR CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO,
AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN PREPARATION FOR THE FIFTH SUMMIT
OF THE AMERICAS**

**“SECURING OUR CITIZENS’ FUTURE BY PROMOTING HUMAN PROSPERITY,
ENERGY SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY”**

**San Salvador, El Salvador – December 7 to 9, 2008
Hotel Hilton Princess**

On December 8 and 9, 2008, a total of 60 civil society representatives from the Central American countries, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic met at the Hotel Hilton Princess in San Salvador, El Salvador, to prepare recommendations for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, “Securing Our Citizens’ Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability,” to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in April 2009. The Forum was organized by the Summits of the Americas Secretariat and the Department of International Affairs of the Organization of American States (OAS).

During the two days of discussions, six open dialogues were held, addressing the topics covered by the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain: promoting human prosperity, environmental sustainability and energy security, strengthening democratic governance and public security, and strengthening the Summits of the Americas process. In addition, an information meeting was held as an introduction to the Summits process.

The recommendations arising from the dialogue among the participants refer to the articles of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, [GRIC/DC-V/doc.1/08](#). The list of participants who attended the Subregional Civil Society Forum for Central America, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic is included as an annex to this document.

RECOMMENDATIONS

HUMAN PROSPERITY

General recommendations:

We back the Caribbean Forum’s recommendation suggesting that the Declaration should offer a framework for improving and strengthening the partnership between governments and civil society by reiterating the principle enshrined in Article 6 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Specific recommendations:

1. Regarding the request in paragraph 6 that the IDB serve as the agency for coordinating the process of reviewing and consolidating all social protection and poverty eradication programs, we recommend justifying this request in terms of Article 14 of the Democratic Charter whereby the member states agree to conduct periodic reviews of the actions adopted and carried out by the Organization.

In addition, organized civil society bodies should be taken into consideration in the review and consolidation of all social protection and poverty eradication programs.

2. Include in paragraph 4: “Our governments commit to promote universally accepted moral and ethic values to ensure harmony in social, economic, cultural, and political relations between nations.”

3. In paragraph 7, referring to promoting the development of the private sector, we recommend considering the inclusion of organizations of the social economy and cooperatives, in light of the significant contributions they make to the economy and to the creation of decent work, and particularly as players who help significantly in mitigating poverty. We recommend the following language: “We will also continue to promote the development of the private sector, those organizations that make up the social economy, and cooperatives, diversifying economic activity and competitiveness.”

4. Faced with the sharp increase in unemployment among experienced workers and a majority who are highly trained caused by the ongoing financial crisis, which is causing accelerated increases in all of our countries’ unemployment rates, it is urgent that within the context of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor of the OAS, in conjunction with trade unions and employers’ organizations and with the support of the ILO, as noted in paragraph 8, this topic be included on the agenda and immediate solutions be proposed to tackle this crisis and provide immediate remedies. If measures are not adopted promptly, we could see the beginning of a period of national chaos, with rising poverty rates.

5. We suggest reviewing the wording of paragraphs 10 and 16, to include and address the topic of gender, making a distinction between boys and girls. In addition, the reference to “women” should be removed from this commitment, since they are only mentioned at the start of the text and the article focuses more on protecting the rights of children. The commitment to protecting women would be better dealt with in a separate paragraph, thereby providing greater support to that marginalized social sector.

6. We urge recognition of the contributions made to economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction by organizations of the social economy and cooperatives; SMEs should not be identified as the only companies that contribute in those areas, as paragraph 11 states. In addition, include the social sector along with private sector for receiving expansion and development promotion and for benefiting from loans. We suggest the following wording: “Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, organizations of the economy social, and cooperatives are vital for economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction. We call on the World Bank Group, the IDB Group, and other regional banks to step up their efforts to activate the development and expansion of the private sector and the social sector, so that by 2012 the loans furnished to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and other productive units are doubled, and the number of companies with access to credit is tripled.”

7. Paragraph 11 also says that loans for productive companies will be promoted, but this measure could be constrained by the financial crisis; we consequently recommend specifying a direct commitment by the Heads of State and Government to contribute 1% of GDP to strengthen development and to create prosperity and wealth, primarily among social-sector organizations, as a safe investment that will help mitigate economic and social problems.

8. In paragraph 12, we propose saying that we will work to facilitate the process of creating new companies, accelerating the timeframe needed for them to begin operations.
9. Paragraphs 14 and 15 should consider that given the recession that is gradually emerging in all our countries, there should be a commitment that any capital injections made give priority to organizations that produce foodstuffs, to help ensure food security.
10. Regarding access to education, mention should be made of including people with disabilities in order to ensure comprehensive inclusion, specifically in paragraph 24.
11. Consider including this new paragraph, since it is not covered by those already dealt with: “Strengthen inter-American cooperation with the support of civil society to increase programs and mechanisms to ensure the promotion of an education system with equality and without discrimination, that serves to prevent all forms of violence – such as harassment and sexual abuse – at places of learning, guaranteeing efforts to ensure safe environments for education where children and adolescents can remain until their education is complete, shown in increases in the annual budgets of the governments.”
12. Regarding increases in enrollment rates, efforts to keep pupils active during all the years of their education should also be included; this should be placed in paragraph 25.
13. In paragraph 26 we recommend replacing the term “disabled people” with “people with disabilities”; this recommendation should also be incorporated into all the other paragraphs that use the former terminology. Thus: “Our governments agree to create and educational and training programs for people with disabilities, and to begin this process by training the trainers who will pursue that undertaking.”
14. We back the proposal made the Caribbean Subregional Forum for the member states to speak of creating opportunities for decent and productive work in the formal sector, including the use of technology transfers and foreign direct investment to support the creation of decent and productive jobs. This plan must specifically address the workplace stigmatization and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS or with any other kind of disability, sexual identity, gender orientation, sexual preference, or gender expression; it must also consider adopting capacity-building programs to create alternative job opportunities for persons with disabilities.
15. Terminology covering lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual or intersex people (LGBTTI) should be specifically included and addressed in discussions about reforms to constitutional rights, human rights, legislation and discrimination, because this is a topic of interest in all the countries of the Americas.
16. Regarding food security, two issues should be stressed. One: the need to ensure protection for the autochthonous products of each region and to support their production. And two: the adoption of measures so that land fit for agriculture and animal husbandry is used exclusively for those activities, thus ensuring the population’s food supply, and so that they are not used for construction projects; of course, it must be noted that there are areas that should be protected out of environmental considerations.

ENERGY SECURITY

General recommendations:

1. Review the operations of the regional energy participation mechanisms that already exist: for example, the Central American Council for Sustainable Development, or the National Councils for Sustainable Development.
2. Establish government commitments toward permanent campaigns for educating society and raising awareness about the importance of saving energy and energy efficiency, in line with paragraph 36.
3. Create or strengthen regulatory frameworks for further promoting the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency in light of the consumption of nonrenewable resources (already included in paragraph 32).
4. Establish government commitments toward guaranteeing universal access to electricity, regardless of the users' geographical location or socioeconomic status.
5. Promote methodological instruments for intersectoral and intercultural dialogue to provide an arena for discussions for formulating policy measures.
6. Special attention to the production of agrifuels, on account of the risk of their competing with food production, which could have an impact on food security, in line with the particular situation of each country.
7. The commitment adopted by the governments must be of relevance over time and over generations.

Specific recommendations:

1. Paragraph 31: Where it says “in our transport systems and industrial sectors,” expand the scope to cover “our transport systems and industrial, commercial, and residential sectors, in order to promote more sustainable patterns of consumption.”
2. Paragraph 32: Clarify the reference to “third parties.”
3. Paragraph 33: Add: “and the small- and large-scale use of onshore and offshore wind turbines.” At the end of the same paragraph, add: “and other new energy technologies, including such autochthonous technologies as rope pumps, forges, and water bags.”
4. Paragraph 34: Change “distribution grids” to “interconnected and isolated networks for electricity distribution. We will cooperate...”
5. Paragraph 35: Change the text that reads “We commit to the promotion of clean energy” to: “We commit to promote the generation of clean energy and its efficient use, through support for research and development, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies...”
6. Paragraph 36: Change the start of the phrase to: “We will carry out permanent public awareness campaigns on energy and environmental issues...”
7. Paragraph 38: Change “(SEPA), with the support and guidance of the IDB and the World Bank...” to: “(SEPA), with the support and guidance of the CABEI, the IDB and the World Bank...”

8. Paragraph 38: Toward the end, change “affordable energy supplies for all, especially the poorest” to “affordable energy supplies, especially to overcome conditions of poverty among the population.”

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

General recommendations:

We recommend dealing with energy security as a separate topic. However, we suggest that in the final Declaration of Commitment it be included under the heading of environmental sustainability.

Specific recommendations:

1. Paragraph 39: Add after “World Summits on Sustainable Development in Rio in 1992...” the following: “emphasizing principle 10, which notes that environmental issues are best handled with citizen participation,...”

2. Paragraph 40: Add: “We commit to establish a plan of action to ensure the progressive reduction and stabilization of concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to a level that will not incur a risk...”

3. Paragraph 41: We suggest starting the paragraph as follows: “Establish a risk reduction policy to prevent disasters and personal vulnerability by incorporating the risk variable into the feasibility studies of all the programs and projects carried out in our countries. Similarly, we will strengthen our mechanisms...”

4. Paragraph 43: We suggest: “We will introduce planning and zoning measures, ... vulnerable areas, and we will facilitate....”

5. Paragraph 45: Include the signature and ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

6. Paragraph 46. End the paragraph at “... a renewed IAPSD.”

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Considering Democratic Governance, we suggest that two significant aspects must be kept in mind: the close relationship between democracy and equity, as indivisible elements supporting good governance; and the need to develop and undertake actions in order to achieve participatory democracy with equality in all sectors, as complementary to representative democracy. From these principles, it is possible to derive concrete proposals oriented to the establishment of civil society participation, without discrimination or exclusion, in public policy making.

Specific recommendations:

1. Paragraph 51: Add: “We commit to guarantee and promote organizations’ right of association, operation, and freedom to develop effective mechanisms for citizen participation.”

2. Paragraph 52: Add: “We will promote effective mechanisms for access to information and citizen oversight.”

3. Paragraph 53: Add: “and respect for the recommendations and decisions of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. We, the Heads of State and Government of the Hemisphere, reaffirm our commitment to the defense and promotion of human rights, regardless of origin, economic or social status, sexual or gender identity, preference, or orientation, HIV status, disabilities, party political ideology, or culture, together with the independence and consolidation of the inter-American human rights system.”

4. Paragraph 54: Add: “The Social Charter of the Americas and its Plan of Action will provide our citizens with greater opportunities to enjoy sustainable development with equality and justice; we therefore commit to negotiate and adopt the documents before the start of 2009.”

5. Paragraph 56: Add: “We commit to continue incorporating gender awareness in our public policies, for young people of both sexes and for women, together with awareness of cultural and sexual diversity, and to strengthen our institutional mechanisms for the advancement of minority groups, and we will promote the full and equal participation of women in our countries’ public lives.”

6. Paragraph 57: Add: “Dialogue among political parties and the citizens will foster a greater understanding of the civil and political rights and duties of citizens, leading to effectiveness in social and political projects, to the benefit of their communities.”

7. We recognize that the OAS, as a multilateral agency, can conduct permanent observations of the member countries’ elections, in order to consolidate electoral processes and instill confidence in them; we instruct the OAS to agree on, in concert with the States and civil society, a mechanism for dialogue and thereby strengthen electoral agencies, ensuring mechanisms for transparency and accountability, through national and international observation organizations, in accordance with the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as ratified by the States.”

MULTIDIMENSIONAL SECURITY

General recommendations:

1. Violence and gender awareness should be a crosscutting theme in the Declaration.
2. The proposals set forth in the Declaration and to which the States commit must be measurable, feasible, and specific.
3. The OAS should include gender as a crosscutting element in its documents, language, and policies.
4. We recommend that the States strengthen the inter-American human rights system and intervene to ensure gender awareness is incorporated into its actions.

Specific recommendations:

1. Contributions to the language of articles 48 to 50:

a. In discussing this topic, the participants urged the governments to consider the forms of violence covered by the Declaration. They must be in line with the multidimensional approach to violence. In that regard, we recommend incorporating the following additions in paragraph 48:

“We are determined to persevere in our efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and organized crime, stigmatization, discrimination, organ trafficking, and trafficking in human lives for sexual purposes and other forms of exploitation, which has become the new slavery of the 21st century. We agree to prevent the phenomenon, to protect the victims, and to pursue the perpetrators and consumers, in accordance with international law, including human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law.”

b. We recommend expanding paragraph 49 as follows: “We will deny any resources to terrorists and criminals, through action or omission, and we will combine our efforts to identify, track, seize or freeze assets associated with terrorism, organized crime, and extortion, in accordance with national legislation and consistent with international law.”

c. In paragraph 50, we urge the governments to include civil society as another player that should participate in the meeting of high-level experts and authorities to develop a common approach.

d. Again in paragraph 50, we propose including other interest groups besides young people whose rights are undermined in different ways by insecurity and multidimensional violence: for instance, children, women, and people with disabilities.

e. The regional strategy referred to in paragraph 50 should explicitly include the identification of an agency or group to define follow-up guidelines to guarantee its effectiveness.

Specific recommendations in the “Public Security” section

1. The public security section must make it clear that the lack of opportunities for human development among the region’s populations, particularly its young people, leads to a high level of risk of their involvement in criminal activities.

2. We recommend including, as an obligatory measure, a commitment to eradicate the exploitation of female images, which is another manifestation of violence.

3. The Declaration must include and acknowledge the participation of other local players in actions to address and prevent different forms of violence, such as community leaders, women’s organizations, faith-based organizations, youth associations, etc. In addition, there should be an explicit commitment to allocate resources to prevention programs in line with their cost-benefit ratios and their consequences.

4. From the civil society perspective, it is essential to create mechanisms for assessing compliance with the international agreements, covenants, and conventions that serve to guarantee that the human rights of different groups and social sectors are upheld. (Convention of Belém do Pará, CEDAW, Inter-American Convention on Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, etc.)

5. We recommend that in addressing the topic of multidimensional security, the governments emphasize education, culture, and families and family environments in preventing violence and punishing crime.

6. It is essential that in the Declaration of this Fifth Summit, the governments agree to strengthen the administration of security and justice, thereby strengthening democratic institutions. In addition, there must be an explicit commitment toward protecting the victims of different forms of discrimination and violence, and to allocating resources for reparations, redress of damages, defense, and security.

7. Guaranteeing multidimensional security must encourage the governments to commit, in this Declaration, to the development of mechanisms and procedures for the follow-up, monitoring, assessment, and social auditing of the different programs and institutions responsible for security and justice in the hemisphere.

Specific recommendations on the “Strengthening Democratic Governance” section:

1. At the end of paragraph 53, we recommend including: “including gender awareness as a crosscutting axis.”

2. Begin paragraph 56 with: “We commit to continue to promote crosscutting gender-aware policies.”

STRENGTHENING THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS, FOLLOW-UP AND IMPLEMENTATION EFFECTIVENESS

1. Paragraph 59: Add: “the second third of 2009” after “(by the end of 2009).”

2. Paragraph 61: Add: “final third of 2009” after “(first quarter of 2010).”

3. Paragraph 62: Add: “women” after “labor, social development.”

4. Paragraph 64: Add: “Recognize and consolidate the contributions of civil society in monitoring the agreements of the Summits of the Americas.”

5. Paragraph 67: “Create an ad hoc civil society consultative council attached to the Summits Secretariat, based in Washington, DC, with a head and deputy head serving a one-year rotating period among the regions of North America, Southern Cone, Andean Region, Central America and the Caribbean. This ad hoc Council shall also be established at the Summit follow-offices in the countries.”

ANNEX

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

SUBREGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM FOR CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO, AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN PREPARATION FOR THE FIFTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS: “SECURING OUR CITIZENS’ FUTURE BY PROMOTING HUMAN PROSPERITY, ENERGY SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY”

San Salvador, El Salvador
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