



The Joint Summit Working Group

Collaborating to Implement the Inter-American and Summits Agendas

Strengthening Democratic Governance

The Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain reaffirms countries' commitment to strengthening the legitimacy of electoral processes. In that regard, the **OAS** carried out 12 Electoral Observation Missions in 2009 with more than 739 electoral observers in El Salvador, Antigua y Barbuda, Ecuador, Panama, Mexico, Colombia, San Vicente and the Grenadines; Bolivia and Dominica. The OAS also implemented the project on strengthening Caribbean Electoral Organizations and carried out a number of electoral projects and studies.

Under the aegis of the Commitment of Port of Spain, in October and December 2009 and in January and March 2010, the GS/OAS Department of International Law organized meetings with a group of government and civil society experts to draft a model law on access to public information and a guide for its implementation, in accordance with the established applicable international standards. The final document that emerged from those meetings' discussions was presented to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs at the end of April 2010.

The GS/OAS Department of International Law provided technical and legal assistance to the working group that is negotiating the draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; it organized a meeting of the caucus of indigenous peoples' representatives in November 2009; and it gave its support to the organization of the 12th Meeting of Negotiations in Pursuit of Consensus in December 2009.

The Department of International Law has been giving technical and legal support to the efforts of the working group charged with negotiating the draft Inter-American Convention Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance. The Department of International Law has also been working with civil society groups representing populations of African descent and the LGBTI community, and it has participated in a series of events to publicize and raise awareness about those topics within society, and to empower those sectors regarding their participation in decision-making processes within international agencies, including the OAS. The Department of International Law has also drawn up a program to incorporate Afro-descendant issues within the Organization's policies and programs.

On March 11th and 12th 2010, the OAS' Department of Legal Cooperation, of the Secretariat for Legal Affairs, in conjunction with the Attorney General's Ministry of



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Belize held a Workshop evaluating the First and Second Rounds of the Mechanism for the Follow-up on the Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC). The main objective of the workshop was to try to get people from a broad sector of society, especially civil society, to make the government truly transparent and responsible. After Belize, some other workshops are planned throughout the year in Trinidad and Tobago, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Suriname as a way to reinforce inter-American efforts at legal cooperation by strengthening national anti-corruption measures.

CAF continued with the implementation of its region-level governance programs, in the understanding that it is important to create potential arenas for strengthening countries' democratic governance and to enhance civic coexistence through dialogue and consensus-building. Framed by four lines of action within the sphere of governance, these efforts offer a crosscutting approach to ethics and transparency within the public administration and in citizen management, and to the development of human capacities for improving the execution of governance and the understanding of how it is exercised in each country's context

Through the Border Cooperation and Integration Fund, the CAF has mobilized 4 million dollars in grants for technical cooperation to support bi-national and multilateral projects and initiatives that promote physical infrastructure, productive development, human and environmental sustainability in common border regions. The Fund also aims at promoting dialogue, mutual trust and good neighborliness among its shareholder countries.

UNDP, in a joint initiative with the OAS, with the support of the Spanish Fund for Latin America, is developing a Second Democracy Report in LA: An Agenda for a Citizen's Democracy. The main goal is to promote a participatory debate to develop an agenda for strengthening democratic governance in the region. Based on a working document prepared with contributions from several experts, a broad set of key actors (government authorities, political, social, economic leaders, scholars and journalists) have taken part in national and subregional consultations and debates in several countries since October 2009: Paraguay, Guatemala, Uruguay, Panama, Colombia, Bolivia (plus upcoming meetings in Mexico and Brazil). This process will result in a publication to be presented in June 2010. The regional report presents strategic issues for democratic governance in



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LAC: the new role of the State, representation, participation and republican control of democratic powers. This process is already opening up new public policies and political dialogues to face the challenges to democracy in Latin America.