



**16 February, 2009**

Compilation of all the answers and comments of the virtual forum on the last two themes of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, "Strengthening Public Security" (Paragraphs 48 to 50), and "Strengthening Democratic Governance" (Paragraphs 51 to 57). Open from January 27<sup>th</sup> to February 15<sup>th</sup> 2009.

After the forum concluded, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat prepared a summary-report of all comments and recommendations made by the participants (both in the English and Spanish fora). This report was distributed to the National Secretariat and OAS member States in order to contribute to the process of negotiation of the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

Questions:

**1. What are the greatest challenges in the Americas related to Public Security?**

In answering this question, please take into account Paragraphs 48 to 50 of the Draft Declaration on the theme 'Strengthening Public Security'.

48. We are determined to persevere in our efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and organised crime, in full compliance with our obligations under international law, including human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law. We, therefore, instruct all Ministers with responsibility for security, policing, intelligence and armed forces, within the framework of the OAS, to continue to cooperate and utilize our collective resources to prevent terrorists and criminal organizations from trespassing across borders and acquiring weapons, and to prevent and combat terrorism and organized crime.
49. We will deny any resources to terrorists and criminals and will combine our efforts to identify, track, seize or freeze assets associated with terrorism and organised crime, in accordance with national legislation and consistent with international law.
50. We direct the OAS, through the Secretariat for Multi-Dimensional Security, to continue in the preparation of a high level meeting of experts and authorities to develop a common approach to matters related to crime and violence and also to prepare a regional strategy to promote Inter-American cooperation in dealing with criminal gangs, giving special attention to young people.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Wednesday, January 28, 2009)* We invite all participants to start the discussion by sharing their thoughts and opinions. We count on your active participation on this forum starting today and until February 13th!

*(Karen Bart-Alexander - Thursday, January 29 de 2009)*

Dear Forum Participants,

I see the greatest challenges as :

- (1) Poor democratic governance and interpersonal violence
- (2) The continuing refusal of governments to implement a human rights approach to poverty alleviation and the social inequities in the societies of the hemisphere
- (3) The absence of a comprehensive and integrated violence prevention plan from a public health perspective in each country
- (4) Corrupt and clueless public officials

Karen Bart-Alexander

GAYAP Violence Prevention Peace and Love Movement

(Claudia Salazar – miércoles February 11, 1009)

Dear Participants,

I would like to share with you the Opening remarks of the OAS Secretary General, Mr. José Miguel Insulza, during the Second Regular Meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group which is taking place this week in Washington (February 9 to 13, 2009).

Member States have begun to discuss matters related to Public Security (Paragraphs 48 to 50 of the Draft Declaration), and this is what our Secretary General said on this occasion:

*“Despite the differences between our countries, the globalization of crime and violence is the overarching feature. Moreover, this form of globalization allows criminal activity to increase the use of technology, its organizational capacity, and its level of violence. This is the principal characteristic of such activities as drug and arms trafficking, trafficking in persons, and transnational criminal networks that organize this illicit trade.”*

*“Although poverty in itself is not the explanation, there is indeed a very clear correlation with crime when poverty is combined with other factors, such as inequality, marginalization, and exclusion endured by a very large segment of the population.”*

The input of this forum is timely and will be shared with Member States prior to the next SIRG meeting (February 23 to 27, 2009).

Thank you for your contributions!!

Claudia

(Claudia Salazar - miércoles, February 11 de febrero, 2009)

Dear Participants,

I would also like to share with you the remarks by Christopher Hernandez-Roy, Director of the Department of Public Security of the OAS at the Second Regular Meeting 2009 of the Summit Implementation Review Group February 9, 2009

*“...not since the Quebec City Summit held back in 2001, has there been Presidential language with a level of detail and specifics that the situation warrants. And by almost all accounts, the security situation has deteriorated since then.*

*Against this backdrop – what do we think should be included in this most recent Presidential declaration? What’s new in terms of our concerns, or our approach to those concerns? What level of detail should there be in a presidential declaration?...”*

In his presentation to Member States, Mr. Hernandez-Roy highlights some of the most pressing problems in the area of Public Security in the Americas and makes specific recommendations regarding the Draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

Please find his complete remarks attached. We encourage you to consider these observations and make your own recommendations to OAS member States. The input of this forum is timely and will be shared with Member States prior to the next SIRG meeting (February 23 to 27, 2009).

(Claudia Salazar - jueves, February 12, 2009)

Dear Participants,

I would also like to share with you the presentation made by our institutional partners from the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) regarding the Public Security situation and their related work in the region, during the Second Regular Meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group which is taking place this week in Washington (February 9 to 13, 2009).

Once again, I would like to remind you that the input of this forum is timely and will be shared with Member States prior to the next SIRG meeting (February 23 to 27, 2009).

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Thank you for your contributions!!

(Vidyaratha Kissoon – Thursday, January 29, 2009)

The challenge would be the perceptions of what criminal activities are and how issues such as terrorism are defined. One person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter. We cannot be selective about violence however, and we have to also take into consideration not only the "public forms of violence, but issues such as domestic violence and other forms of gender based violence, and the abuse of children, still sanctioned through the corporal punishment legislation in several Caribbean countries.

Should we hold gun manufacturers accountable for the distribution of their weapons? If there were less weapons, would there be less gun related crimes in our part of the world?

(Gale Mohammed-Oxley – Sunday, February 1, 2009)

The greatest challenge today related to Public Security is trust. Both between public officials and the public and between/among security personnel. Idea that you can be obeying orders from someone that is in high office that can subject you to death is terrifying.

(Abraham Fergusson - Sunday, February 1, 2009)

In what may appear to be my childish view, all the words used in the statement from 48 - 50 sound very good but when will they be implemented? the region has been going down hill at a very fast rate due to crime; it is time to stop talking - just remember the time for action is now!

(Lina Maria Marmolejo – Monday, February 2, 2009)

Thank you all for exchanging your ideas and point of view. I would like to know what do you think it could be said about these challenges particularly related with the Caribbean States? What constitute the main major sources of insecurity, or major threats to security? What are the implications in the design and implementation of public policy?

(Danielle Lewis - Thursday, February 5, 2009)

The issue of Public Security is of utmost importance to our region. However in the Caribbean Region we use out dated methods of crime fighting when the criminals have stepped into the 21st century and are using technology against us. I believe that scientific crime fighting will go a long way in the Caribbean. DNA testing, a centralized computer/database system in which persons in the police force and army can access information such as Driving license, persons with police records etc.

The region especially Caribbean countries should have a shared database of career criminals especially those involved in terrorist activities. One our greatest challenges is that we look at ourselves as each being an isolated nation when we should look at ourselves as one. In this way we

would be able to exchange ideas on Public Security and learn from each other's successes and mistakes.

*(Andy Paul – Friday, February 13, 2009)*

I think Danielle has put this issue across very nicely. DNA should be compulsory. All Governments should make this part of their crime fighting initiative. Then there is the issue of the breathalyzer How many Governments in the region has this as law? We need to fight this plague from all angles.

What is really puzzling is why haven't Governments computerized important departments and have a data base system whereby police officers or other relevant officers/department can retrieve pertinent information to assist in solving crime and our safety? As Danielle mentioned, the Police and Army/Regiment should be able to immediately access information such as Driving License and police records etc. Again, we need to lobby our Governments to act and act now. We have had too many consultations. It is time to act. Our lives and safety are at risk.

We must recognize that no man is an island. In light of globalization, we need to assist and collaborate in a meaningful manner in our region. We need to integrate.

*(Gale Mohammed-Oxley – Sunday, February 8, 2009)*

Danielle has struck a nerve there. Outdated is a joke in some instances. Even the attitude and behavior of authority figures complete the cycle of incompetence. CSOs challenge the Public security further when they contribute to the breakdown of trust by pushing their personal agendas and not looking at the common good.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo – Tuesday, February 10, 2009)*

Danielle and Gale, thanks for your comments!

Certainly, strengthening state capacity to respond to the problem of crime and violence may require international cooperation but most importantly a better system of national and regional coordination is needed in order to establish a common plan to increase responsiveness and meet the public safety needs of citizens throughout the region.

*(Christian Rishmawy - Tuesday, February 10, 2009)*

I am not extensively aware of this but I recall that during the mandate of former Honduran president Ricardo Maduro, some kind of legislation was developed, which eliminated many "trabas" that impeded police forces to proceed effectively against criminals ("mareros") who conveniently cross the border (mostly to El Salvador and back to Honduras when things get ugly^\*for them\* over there). I think this is an important issue to investigate. It is not an issue that involves Central American countries only. I recall the recent events that raised tensions in South America, where Farc terrorists crossed Colombian borders into Ecuador, and Colombia felt that they had the right to go after them, under the very special circumstances of meddling by Ecuador and Venezuela. (((This took place prior to Ingrid Betancourt's liberation. President Hugo Chavez had intervened (seemingly on invitation) and became a little too romantic with Farc. It even seems that they became a little too involved with Farc (but this is a closed issue until now). Colombian president Uribe had seen that things could spiral out of control and had decided not to give in to Farc.))) Victimizer governments of Venezuela and Ecuador decided to make a big issue (of national sovereignty) about this, but the whole issue ended when president Uribe decided NOT to make a big issue about the info in the laptops the Colombians found. The message was very clear to the meddlers: "Do not mess with us; otherwise you'll be in deep trouble". In this case trespassing was the right move, but it did have its illegal component though. Therefore I guess it would be appropriate to investigate how this is dealt with in Central America, to figure out if it is a model which could be implemented in other parts of the region.

*(Vidyaratha Kissoon – Friday, February 13, 2009)*

There is a larger concern about the ambivalent use of violence in societies.. The Caribbean especially seems to be dominated by the need to have corporal punishment in schools; in fact it is bizarre that last legitimate state violence is perpetrated against children. This poses the problem when trying to confront violence in the society.

*(Andy Paul - Friday, February 13, 2009)*

Our greatest challenge is our vulnerability due to our size. We need to have proper security at our borders. Whether it is air or sea patrol and up-to-date radar facilities. Our borders need to be secured.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo – Sunday, February 15, 2009)*

Please find a contribution from Dr. Merle Baker.

On the issue of crime, terrorism

As a closing suggestion on the issue I want to suggest that the victims of terrorism, crime etc should be catered for in a significant way. Not only because their combined reports and experiences will provide rich and detailed intelligence but especially the youth needs to be targeted positively. The young people represent a large sector of our human resource if not re-directed to love and contribute positively can and will add to the continued existence of the negatives - terrorism, revenge, crime etc.

## **2. What are the greatest challenges in the Americas related to Democratic Governance?**

In answering this question, please take into account Paragraphs 51 to 57 of the Draft Declaration on the theme “Strengthening Democratic Governance”

51. All of our aspirations and goals for the Americas depend on strong democracies, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We, therefore, renew our commitment to strengthen our democratic institutions and uphold and apply the principles and values of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.
52. Committed to increasing the transparency, integrity, accountability and efficiency in the public and private sectors, we will strengthen our fight against all forms of corruption and unethical behavior. We renew our commitment to the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption and will develop and implement policies that foster a culture of integrity and transparency among citizens and public officers, and within public offices and institutions.
53. We reaffirm our commitment to the defense, protection and promotion of human rights and to the independence and strengthening of the Inter-American System of Human Rights.
54. The Social Charter of the Americas and its Plan of Action will offer our citizens more opportunities to benefit from sustainable development with equity and social inclusion. We, therefore, commit to conclude and adopt these documents before the end of 2009.
55. We also reaffirm that discrimination of any kind inhibits the full participation of all persons in society and will continue and conclude negotiations on the Inter-American Convention against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance. We will also continue to develop the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
56. We commit to continue mainstreaming gender into our public policies and to strengthen the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of girls and women. We will advance women’s full and equal participation in political life and decision-making at all levels in their countries, and enforce laws that promote respect for their human rights, and gender equity and equality.
57. We recognize the important role of the OAS in the peaceful resolution of our differences and in support of the objectives of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. We commit to improve the capacity of the OAS in its efforts to assist in enhancing peace and the democratic, social and economic stability of our region.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo – Wednesday, January 28, 2009)*

Thanks Claudia!

Indeed it is an important question to think about carefully.

We'll expect all participants interested in this topic to start exchanging their ideas!

*(Claudia Salazar – Wednesday, February 11, 2009.)*

Dear Participants,

I would like to share with you the Opening remarks of the OAS Secretary General, Mr. José Miguel Insulza, during the Second Regular Meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group which is taking place this week in Washington (February 9 to 13, 2009).

Member States have begun to discuss matters related to Democratic Governance (Paragraphs 51 to 57 of the Draft Declaration) and this is what our Secretary General said on this occasion:

*“The Summit Process is looking for a multidimensional way to strengthen democracy and governance, helping to reduce poverty and increase opportunities in the Americas. The multiple aspects of the draft Declaration of Port of Spain show quite clearly that a multidimensional approach to the challenges we face in order to achieve integral development, peace and prosperity is a diverse and complex goal to strive for.”*

The input of this forum is timely and will be shared with Member States prior to the next SIRG meeting (February 23 to 27, 2009).

Thank you for your contributions!!

*(Karen Bart-Alexander – Thursday, January 29, 2009)*

Dear Forum participants,

The greatest challenges related to Democratic Governance are:

- (1) the unwillingness of governments to implement all the commitments they make in these costly international meetings
- (2) the unwillingness of governments to lead their countries to find political solutions that are suitable to their special circumstances
- (3) the absence of penalties for failure to implement the commitments or for implementation of actions contrary to the commitments.

*(Vidyaratha Kisson - Thursday, January 29, 2009)*

I agree with Karen, there has to be a mechanism which shows the follow up of the commitments made at these fora. Some countries are now learning about democracy, and there is an ongoing concern that democracy is seen as the tyranny of the majority.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Thursday, January 29, 2009)*

Thanks Vidyaratha for your contribution! As I mentioned in a comment to Karen; I believe that CSOs have an important role to play in monitoring and follow up governments. However, I would like to hear your opinion about what type of monitoring and follow up mechanism should be put in place to ensure implementation of these commitments?

*(Karen Bart-Alexander – Friday, February 13, 2009)*

Dear Vidyaratha, Lisa, Gale and Others,

In terms of Compliance, the Network Of NGOs for the Advancement of Women has developed an Index of Government Compliance to monitor and report on the compliance of governments to their commitments. This Index will be launched in the run -up to the Summit and is expected to be presented at the Civil Society Forum. I have asked the Network, of which I am a member to enter the discussion and give some information on the index. We must congratulate the Network on this initiative. I also think that apart from Civil Society, governments can take responsibility for setting up electronic monitoring instruments in all their Foreign Affairs Ministries.

*(Vidyaratha Kisson – Sunday, February 15, 2009)*

Thanks Karen and hope that this could be shared widely, even if outside of this forum

*(Gale Mohammed-Oxley - Sunday, February 1, 2009)*

Again I approve the previous respondents. However, the human element of trust and responsibility can weigh down on some governments. I would not claim their tardiness for unknown circumstance but now that CSOs are involved we can examine objectively and assist where needed.

*(Gale Mohammed-Oxley - Sunday, February 8, 2009)*

Are we for real? Do we have a working concept of Democratic Governance? Have CSOs been exposed to real democracy? Can we really objectively answer this question when some of us practice a different type of governance in our groups? Challenges to governance are personal styles. Personality takes on the demeanor of the office holder at every level of the democratic chain and I will like to begin from the classroom where our first interaction with the world takes place.

*(Claudia Salazar - Sunday, February 8, 2009)*

Thank you Gale,

An early start is without a doubt key to promote democratic governance. Thus, it is pertinent to highlight here that in August 2005, the Ministers of Education adopted the Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices (EDUCADEM) which is being implemented by the OAS Department of Education and Culture (DEC). The Program supports initiatives of three types: Research, Professional Development and Educational Resources, and Information Exchange. To read more about this initiative, please visit [EDUCADEM](#).

Is this the type of comprehensive approach that could finally promote true democratic governance in our countries? Or, as included in Par. 51 of the draft Declaration, "strengthen our democratic institutions and uphold and apply the principles and values of the Inter-American Democratic Charter."

In addition, as a cross-cutting issue, Par. 27 also mentions a commitment to "continue to invest in our young people and adopt policies and programs that will...increase their social engagement, open avenues for leadership, allow for meaningful participation in decision-making activities..."

Considering the challenges put forth by the participants in this forum, do you consider that both of these Par. are clear and feasible commitments that could in fact strengthen the levels of democratic governance in our region?

Thank you all for your participation and comments!

*(Gale Mohammed-Oxley - Tuesday, February 10, 2009)*

I have seen this document and it is a start. I will say implementing paragraph 52 will do the trick. What we need is a group to monitor CSOs as well as the participating states in this area of governance.

*(Gale Mohammed-Oxley - Tuesday, February 10, 2009.)*

Article 27 of the Inter-American Charter need to include Integral Human Development such that those inter human values that strengthen political institutions and civil society organizations be promoted.

*(Danielle Lewis - Wednesday, February 11, 2009.)*

1) Education for all - Governments throughout the Americas need to invest a lot more in the complete education of their boys/girls and men/women. No-one should be left out of the equation. Each person regardless of their disability is able to learn. I also believe that education for the mentally disabled should be enhanced because they too, once given the tools can make valuable contributions to our society. I also believe that a sound education should not be for the "privileged" but for all persons in our society.

2) Corruption- This is a major issue in our region. Too often leaders are elected who eventually rob the nations leaving them in worse condition that they found them in. This depletes the region's resources and causes citizens to become jaded about the political system.

3) Elections in this region are often times determined by race or class and not on a person's ability to effectively govern a country. Such actions make a mockery out of the democratic process and render it fruitless.

*(Gale Mohammed-Oxley – Friday, February 13, 2009.)*

I agree with Danielle's point. In Trinidad and Tobago the Church and the State have a good relationship that can be strengthened to assist in the total development of the human person. The Church can assist in the moral development while the State can ensure the other aspects of development are promoted. We have what is called denominational schools where the state and the church are responsible for the day to day administration of the students. The Concordat has been signed between the two and this can be strengthened to ensure democratic governance can support public security.

### **3. Are these challenges being addressed in the Draft Declaration?**

In answering this question, please take into account that as drafted, the main subthemes being addressed in paragraphs 48 to 57 include:

- a. Inter-American cooperation on Public Security
- b. Democratic institutions and transparency
- c. Protection and promotion of Human Rights
- d. Social Charter of the Americas and its Plan of Action
- e. Equity and Social Inclusion

\*Special mention to the Inter-American Convention against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance and to the draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

*(Karen Bart-Alexander - Thursday, January 29, 2009)*

No. Because this declaration just adds commitments that are not likely to be kept if there is no accountability on the part of governments.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Thursday, January 29, 2009)*

Dear Karen,

Thanks a lot for your contribution to the discussion!

I would like to ask you what do you think it could be done to ensure the implementation of these commitments at the national level?

*(Karen Bart-Alexander – Friday, February 13, 2009)*

Lisa,

I recommend that Electronic Monitoring Instruments should be put in place in all Foreign Affairs Ministries and these instruments should be monitored and overseen by Parliamentary Committees with a responsibility to report to Parliaments, people and responsible international agency such as the OAS on compliance . This will make for more balanced reporting because it would include all the activities of the government that contradict the commitments as well. As it stands at the present time, the contradictory activities do not form part of the reporting process. A system of penalties will also help.

*(Claudia Salazar – Tuesday, February 3, 2009)*

Thank you Karen,

That is actually a very good point and there is certainly something to be said of what is implied by the term "addressing" (in the sense of mentioning the challenge), and 'addressing' in the sense of actually tackling them.

In the past, Summit Declarations have been accompanied by a Plan of Action intended as a guideline for the governments to achieve the goals set forth in the Declaration. However, in this particular Summit, the host government of Trinidad and Tobago changed the methodology and opted for only one outcome document and not two. Hence, for the Fifth Summit we have a Declaration of Commitment (a combination of the two).

In this regard, the Declaration of Commitment should in fact not only mention the regional political priorities and challenges, but also outline the way forward for signatory countries.



Do participants believe that this is something that is effectively done in paragraphs 48 to 50 on 'Strengthening Public Security' and 51 to 57 on 'Strengthening Democratic Governance'?

Thank you for your participation!

*(Karen Bart-Alexander - Friday, February 13, 2009)*

Claudia,

I think that Article 49 comes closest to achieving the aim of combining the two but overall the Declaration fails to reflect both commitment and action. Commitment tells us what will be done; action articulates how it will be done, by whom and in what time frame. It might also indicate what resources are needed and the expected outcomes. It is really a very effective monitoring tool and assists with consistent implementation across states. The removal of the Action Plan from the process is a retrograde step which should have been resisted. I hope that we can reinstate it in future Summits if it proves to be still a handicap in the development process.

*(Gale Mohammed-Oxley – Tuesday, February 10, 2009)*

The challenge of implementation is timing. I believe that now CSOs are on board there will be greater participation for the signatory countries. What we also need is a commitment to help the weaker states to achieve at least 50% of the goals by sharing Human Resources as the need arises. I believe an exchange of Human Resources through the CSOs can be done effectively to bring about a greater understanding of the needs and problems encountered by States in the implementation of suggested goals. The Documents can be compiled to one page the Human element makes the difference.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Tuesday, February 10, 2009)*

Thanks Gale! I believe that sharing of good practices is one of the most effective and efficient approach to solve problems or improving the way things are being done, since it minimize risks and costs. All of these taking into account a greater improvement strategy including HR development, training and sharing in the particular context of the region.

*(Vidyaratha Kissoon - Friday, February 13, 2009)*

The draft declaration should also (p55) include some commitment by states to reviewing their discriminatory legislation and to standardize across the region and use best practices on human rights, especially when it comes to matters of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

There should also be a commitment to ensuring that legislation is implemented many times the legislation exists, especially for democratic institutions, but the implementation is weak.

#### **4. What should civil society commit to doing towards confronting these challenges?**

The challenge of achieving the goals set forth in the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain does not rely on governments alone. As civil society and other social actors strengthen their role in our hemisphere, what do you think their commitment should be in implementing these mandates?

*(Karen Bart-Alexander - Thursday, January 29, 2009)*

Civil Society needs to mind their own business to strengthen themselves, develop mechanisms for participation and consensus, efficient communication methodologies between and among themselves so that they can easily purge countries of clueless criminal regimes who have anti-people agendas. They also need to become less dependent on governments and strong enough to ensure that governments must listen when they speak.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Thursday, January 29, 2009)*

Dear Karen,

Thanks again for your comments. Indeed Civil Society should ensure recognition as public interest actors and contribute to strengthen democracy. However; don't you think that civil society

organizations could use their skills and flexibility of action to also make a positive impact in particular areas regarding public security and democratic governance?

*(Karen Bart-Alexander - Friday, February 13, 2009)*

Certainly Lisa but there are some considerations that must be looked at for CS to be able to function effectively. An important one is the availability of independent funding. In that case we need to revisit the requisite "no objection from government" clause that many of the large funders mandate. Lisa, Civil Society is aware of what the solutions are but the ability to implement, in the face of fiercely competitive governments who are threatened by any sensible action that they cannot lay claim to, is what poses the problem. Because CS is so divided and powerless, we sit helplessly while our governments throw billions of dollars behind harebrained schemes that do nothing but maintain them in office. The answer is a concerted effort to enable civil society to function without having to resort to moving governments out of their way. Certainly the CS Summit will enable CS to develop its own strategies for supporting implementation of the commitment in our countries but the real trouble begins when we seek to function unimpeded by "them".

*(Vidyaratha Kissoon - Thursday, January 29, 2009)*

Civil society should be informed of the commitments and network on the sharing of responses. There are going to be some issues which will be dealt with, while others will not be dealt with. There are special interest groups which exist and who could learn from what is happening in other parts of the OAS. Some of us who do not know Spanish would have to learn!

*(Vidyaratha Kissoon - Thursday, January 29, 2009)*

Civil society actors should prepare itself to participate in transparent processes, by being credible and transparent themselves and by being democratic within the organizations. The engagement with other actors, including the government should also be transparent and should not be exclusive of other "competing" organizations.

Civil society should also be able to innovate solutions and advocate for the changes which are based on best practices in other countries, and be consistent.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo – Friday, January 30, 2009)*

Dear Vidyaratha, Thanks once again for your contributions about the role of CSOs, their need of transparency and innovation by the transfer of knowledge and best practices. They provide the opportunity to learn from the experience of other projects and avoid obstacles and make the best use of resources.

*(Gale Mohammed-Oxley – Sunday, February 1, 2009)*

CSOs cannot build the capacity on their own to complete what the Governments are signing to at the Summits. What CSOs need is internal support from each other through networking the networks that exist within the various organizations and informing those who are not in that matter of concentration. The advent of personal agenda seems very real as the more aggressive participants will ensure that their agenda take precedent over others. What is needed is good social order among CSOs as an example for those participating states. It may be interesting to see how the new order of CSOs evolves.

*(Vidyaratha Kissoon – Monday, February 2, 2009)*

Gale is right, we have to be able to embrace a new order which sees a willingness to collaborate and to ensure that our agendas are clear and expectations are understood. It will be difficult but we have had many experiences at national levels of collaboration and where former "opponents" have been able to find common ground and values.

The OAS is the only regional actor here I find which seems to genuinely want to engage civil society and that must continue.. Some of the other regional actors are selective

*(Claudia Salazar – Tuesday, February 3, 2009)*

Thank you for that comment. The OAS is making an effort to facilitate the participation of social actors in its political processes, and the SVP initiative will certainly inform institutional development in using online platforms and social media to promote further engagement by different stakeholders.

Participant's inputs in this regard are of great value to this initiative and we expect to continue to call on CSO for further inputs to ensure an effective platform.

We will make sure to keep everybody posted on the new developments!

Meanwhile, in preparation for the Fifth Summit - We encourage all of your comments and contributions to this debate on the themes Public Security and Democratic Governance.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Monday, February 2, 2009)*

Thanks again Gale and Vidyaratha ! How collaboration and networking could be foster at the national and regional level?

*(Vidyaratha Kissoon – Wednesday, February 4, 2009)*

Right Lina. I think nationally CSOs collaborate on common issues and areas of interest, and in small societies like in the English speaking Caribbean that is usually easy to do. Of course there are problems if there are perceived "competing" interests or the jostling for power and recognition. societies which do not have a democratic tradition, like Guyana have a double challenge about understanding roles of citizenship and there are some issue oriented CSOs who would prefer to avoid "politics". Regionally, networking across countries is limited by distance.

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Wednesday, February 4, 2009)*

Thanks Vidyaratha for your comments and for giving us examples of your country! As you said networking at the national level could be an easier task. Internationally would require more resources and the use and implementation of information and communication technologies to overcome distance.

*(Gale Mohammed-Oxley - Tuesday, February 10, 2009)*

With respect to networking and collaboration I believe those countries that can afford to release personnel to other countries can do so. With respect to the CSOs that prefer not to become involved in politics this may be more true with respect to party politics that does not transcend the national good ( this can be seen as a problem for transparency) over party issues. The challenge for democratic governance now is how can parties who eventually become governments govern with opposition parties and CSOs. There are constitutions and constitutions. We are ignoring the fact that money is behind most of the aggressive competitors even among CSOs as well.

*(Gale Mohammed-Oxley –Friday, February 13, 2009)*

I believe that faith based and affiliated CSOs can support by strengthening their capacity to give support to the declarations made at this Summit. They should not be forced to comply with suggestions made by other advocacy groups because they have a common purpose when it comes to the related themes of the Summit.

## **5. What should the role of inter-sectorial partnerships be in confronting these challenges?**

What can governments and social actors do to facilitate these partnerships?, What can the OAS do?, Are there areas related to Strengthening Public Security and Democratic Governance where these partnerships could be particularly relevant?

*(Karen Bart-Alexander – Thursday, January 29, 2009)*

All intersectorial partners need to insist that a comprehensive integrated plan for violence prevention is put in place in their countries in which they would be able to see their role clearly and execute their role efficiently in the context of the overall plan. The existence of such a plan will also identify the linkages between the various sectors and the ways in which these linkages can be operationalized.

*(Vidyaratha Kissoon - Thursday, January 29, 2009)*

Inter sectorial partnerships are important, however the attitudes to violence especially must be consistent, we should be working together on domestic violence, child abuse, homophobic violence the partnerships should be transparent, and be seen to be beneficial. There are also unorganized people and groups with whom the partnerships could happen, especially when dealing with crime

*(Lina Maria Marmolejo - Friday, January 30, 2009)*

Dear Karen and Vidyaratha, As you mentioned inter-sectorial alliances for prevention of crime and violence are key. What do you think the OAS and other regional actors can do to foster develop such partnership and contribute to the creation of a culture of peace?

*(Vidyaratha Kissoon – Wednesday, February 4, 2009)*

Right Lina, what can OAS and the Regional actors do:

First, the OAS has done a good job at opening up to civil society, especially the emerging organizations and this means that knowledge of each other is key to building the partnerships. We should review whether we discuss matters sectorally or as global actors is the private sector not as concerned about violence as "civil society"? etc some regional actors are selective about who they allow to participate in alliances and in consultations, and that will have to change. There are other issues such as providing multilingual platforms and using the technology to facilitate the partnerships (like the SVP)

*(Karen Bart-Alexander - Friday, February 13, 2009)*

Lina Maria,

I am glad that you asked that question. In each country in the region ,where this does not exist, there is a need for policy makers and planners from each sector to come together in a workshop led by an expert facilitator to design a framework for an integrated national violence prevention plan using a public health perspective. This framework can then be used to flesh out a full national plan. This process can be enabled by the OAS and other regional actors. Also, each country needs to develop violence prevention plans for each community based on the public health perspective. Again this process will require support and it will be particularly important to ensure that these community plans are funded in their entirety. I hope that this makes sense.

*(Gale Mohammed-Oxley – Sunday, February 1, 2009)*

The saying peace begins with me can be applied here. I favor Vidya's proposal. But when can inter-sectorial partners meet after subjecting each other to choose an alternative to where each was previously going? A case of mistrust develops and fear steps in. This can be viewed as major contributor to the reasons for the existing challenges. I am sure the U.S.A. is willing to assist where they can but would other states that have had prior disagreements with the U.S.A. be willing to take a chance again with them? Again the CSOs can help heal the wounds of the past.

*(Caleb Orozco - Friday, February 13, 2009)*

Where inter-sectorial partnership is is concern, the partnership has to be advocacy base using rights based approaches. In the Caribbean Region LGBT rights is violated by 11 states. We cannot call a state democratic if a country like Trinidad will not include wording in the draft declaration that that addresses LGBT Rights. We cannot call a state democratic if its leaders are going to use a section of the population for political point scoring to get votes. So while inter-sectorial partnership maybe a concept, inclusiveness of LGBT populations needs to be there otherwise good governance is for the few and the many. More important so is fair treatment

*(Caleb Orozco –Saturday, February 14, 2009)*

CARICOM member states and specifically the government of Trinidad should be ashamed for removing text that tries to address stigma and discrimination against LGBT populations in the workplace, human rights violation. It should be ashamed that even after CARICOM member states supported AG/RES 2435 (XXXVIII-0/08) entitled human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity adopted at the 3rd plenary on June 3, 2008 that condemned acts of violence and human rights abuses. If the democratic process is ever going to be strengthening, it must be inclusive in its

partnership, consistent in its policy and legislative process, reliable for supporting citizen redress. For the Trinidadian government to delete references to LGBT concern is an act that defeats the opportunity of inclusive inter-sectoral partnership in the system.

*(Yema Jaikaran – Sunday, February 15, 2009)*

Hi!

I am a little late on the discussion, but I was thinking that perhaps, one of the things that should be considered quite deeply is the culture of a people. The Caribbean may be similar in Geography but every island has a different culture. Sometimes I think we do not consider how blanket policies will be accepted in a particular society and then we run into problems in the implementation. It's the same problem with developmental models. When people start talking about "Rights", I always maintain talk about the "Responsibilities" that go along with that right. Then when we can value it, we'll see the implementation to protect it!