



CIVIL SOCIETY HEMISPHERIC FORUM: “SECURING OUR CITIZENS’ FUTURE BY
PROMOTING HUMAN PROSPERITY, ENERGY SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY”

May, 1-2, 2008 – Miami, Florida.

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BACKGROUND

In April 2009, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will host the Fifth Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain. The Summits provide an effective mechanism for regional dialogue as they bring together the Heads of State and Government of the Western Hemisphere to discuss common concerns, seek solutions and develop a shared vision for the region's future socioeconomic and political development. Four Summits of the Americas have been held to date; in Miami, Florida (1994); Santiago, Chile (1998); Quebec City, Canada (2001); and Mar del Plata, Argentina (2005). There have also been two Special Summits: Santa Cruz, Bolivia (1996) and Monterrey, Mexico (2004).

In the framework of the forthcoming Fifth Summit of the Americas, the Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Summits of the Americas Secretariat of the Organization of the American States (OAS) held the *Civil Society Hemispheric Forum: "Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability,"* at the Miami Marriott Biscayne Bay on May 1-2, 2008 in Miami, Florida, USA.

The Secretariat for the Fifth Summit and the OAS Summits Secretariat recognize the importance of fostering a positive and productive relationship with civil society in preparation for the Fifth Summit of the Americas. Civil society contributions are valuable to the inter-American agenda in that civil society organizations (CSOs) possess expertise in many areas relevant to the objectives of the Heads of State and Government.

To this end, the purpose of this Civil Society Forum was to encourage discussions and the exchange of ideas among civil society organizations that are interested in the follow up and implementation of Summits of the Americas mandates and work in the areas of the inter-American agenda. This Forum provided civil society representatives an opportunity to formalize and compile their recommendations and suggestions on the themes of the Fifth Summit of the Americas as set forth by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in its Concept Paper.¹

The format of the Civil Society Hemispheric Forum consisted of plenary sessions and four moderated thematic roundtables all related to the theme of the Fifth Summit:

- Human development and poverty reduction, including health, nutrition, education and violent crime;
- Economic growth and competitiveness;
- Energy security and sustainable development, including climate change and natural disasters;
- Democracy, good governance and the promotion of human rights.

During each roundtable, participants discussed the issues among themselves, contributing their points of view as well as reconciling their differences of opinion, and developed recommendations on how to address the theme of the Fifth Summit "Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability" most effectively in the draft of the Declaration of Commitments of Port of Spain.

The OAS Summits Secretariat, with the support of the United States Agency of International Development (USAID), the Inter-American Foundation (IAF), the United States Department of State,

¹ The principle document of reference was the *Concept Paper for the Fifth Summit of the Americas* prepared by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and contained in document [CP/INF.5672/08](#).

the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the Open Society Institute, covered participation costs of a determined number of civil society representatives to participate in the Forum. As selection criteria, requests for participation from interested organizations were considered based on ensuring equitable gender and geographic representation, relevant experience and background in the subject areas in question; and the organization's association and affiliation with other resources and organizations in the hemisphere.

Participants of the Forum included representatives of civil society organizations and networks, the National Coordinator and Personnel of the Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, representatives of various OAS member states, representatives of institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group, and personnel of the OAS General Secretariat.

SUMMARY OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY HEMISPHERIC FORUM: “SECURING OUR CITIZENS’ FUTURE BY PROMOTING HUMAN PROSPERITY, ENERGY SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY”²

May 1, 2008

Inaugural Session³

Counselor Frances Seignoret, Alternate Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the Organization of American States (OAS), fulfilled the role of master of ceremonies.

Welcoming remarks were offered by Ambassador Hector Morales, National Summit Coordinator of the United States and Permanent Representative of the United States to the OAS, Ambassador Glenda Morean-Phillip, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the OAS and Chair of the Inter-American Committee on Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities (CISC) of the OAS Permanent Council Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs, and OAS Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Albert Ramdin.

Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodríguez, National Coordinator and Special Envoy to the Americas of the Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas from the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago delivered the keynote address.

Mr. David Morris, Director of the OAS Summits of the Americas Secretariat, introduced the program and methodology of the Forum. Finally, Professor Anthony Clayton made a presentation on the theme for the Fifth Summit of the Americas “Securing Our Citizens’ Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability” on behalf of the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.⁴

Thematic Roundtables to discuss the topics of the Hemispheric Agenda

Participants then broke into thematic roundtables:

² The Agenda of this meeting is included in Annex I

³ Full text of all remarks are included as Annex IV

⁴ This presentation is available as an electronic document at via the OAS Civil Society Website at www.civil-society.oas.org and by clicking on the weblink [English](#).

- Human development and poverty reduction, including health, nutrition, education and violent crime;
- Economic growth and competitiveness;
- Energy security and sustainable development, including climate change and natural disasters; and
- Democracy, good governance and the promotion of human rights.

Each roundtable was introduced by a presentation by the guest expert(s) and facilitated by a civil society moderator. Roundtable participants elected at least one civil society representative to serve as a rapporteur. For the remainder of the afternoon, participants engaged in discussion on the roundtable themes as they relate to the Concept Paper for the Fifth Summit of the Americas and prepared recommendations, suggestions, and proposals.

May 2, 2008

On the morning of May 2, 2008, civil society representatives from each of the four thematic roundtables met to review and further elaborate the recommendations that were the results of the roundtable discussions. The objective of this time was to finalize each group's recommendations for further discussion in plenary.

Presentation of recommendations from roundtables and discussion

Mr. David Morris, Director of the Summits of the Americas Secretariat, moderated the session, welcoming all participants to the final day of the Hemispheric Forum and opening the floor for each thematic working group to present the results of their discussions. Following the presentations, the floor was opened for comments by other civil society representatives.

Mr. Morris reminded participants that the Civil Society Hemispheric Forum was an opportunity to strengthen civil society participation and to contribute ideas and recommendations regarding the theme of the Fifth Summit of the Americas for consideration in the negotiation of the Summit outcome document.

Presentation of the recommendations to the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, Trinidad and Tobago

Mr. Morris moderated the session and expressed his satisfaction with the commitment demonstrated by civil society during the rich discussions that took place in each of the four thematic roundtables. He reiterated his appreciation for the presence of the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Assistant Secretary General and expressed his thanks to the Summits Secretariat team for the organization and preparation of this Hemispheric Forum.

The moderator then offered the floor to the rapporteur of each thematic roundtable to present the recommendations to the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.⁵

Following the presentations, Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodríguez, National Coordinator and Special Envoy to the Americas of the Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas from the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago expressed his deep appreciation to the civil society representatives for their efforts to develop thoughtful and high quality recommendations that would

⁵ Please see Annex II for the full text of the recommendations presented by the thematic roundtables.

doubtlessly enrich the negotiations among the OAS Member States as they negotiated the draft Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

The moderator thanked all civil society representatives, noted that recommendations would be published, translated, and circulated, and again stressed the importance of the dialogue that had taken place. The Forum was adjourned.

ANNEX I - AGENDA

CIVIL SOCIETY HEMISPHERIC FORUM:
“Securing Our Citizens’ Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability”

Agenda

May 1, 2008

9:00 - 9:45 a.m.

Opening Session

Welcoming Remarks:

Ambassador Hector Morales, National Summit Coordinator of the United States

Ambassador Glenda Morean Phillip, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the OAS

Ambassador Albert Ramdin, Assistant Secretary General, OAS

Keynote Address

Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodríguez, National Coordinator and Special Envoy to the Americas, Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

9:45 -10:00 a.m.

Introduction and Methodology

David Morris, Director, Summits of the Americas Secretariat, Organization of American States

10:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Presentation on the Theme for the Fifth Summit of the Americas “Securing Our Citizens’ Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability”

Professor Anthony Clayton, Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas

10:30 - 10:45a.m.

Coffee Break

11:00 - 1:30 p.m.

Thematic Roundtables to discuss the Issues and make Recommendations for the Fifth Summit

- Human development and poverty reduction, including health, nutrition, education and violent crime
- Economic growth and competitiveness
- Energy security and sustainable development, including climate change and natural disasters
- Democracy, good governance and the promotion of human rights

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Lunch break

2:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Continuation of Thematic Roundtable Discussions

May 2, 2008

9:30 -12:30 p.m. **Continuation of Thematic Roundtable discussions and finalization of Civil Society recommendations**

12:30-1:30 p.m. *Lunch Break*

1:30 - 3:00 p.m. **Plenary Session: Presentation of recommendations from Roundtables and Discussion**

Moderator: David Morris, Director, Summits of the Americas Secretariat, OAS

3:00 - 3:15 p.m. *Coffee Break*

3:15 - 5:00 p.m. **Presentation of the recommendations to the National Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, Trinidad and Tobago**

Moderator: David Morris, Director, Summits of the Americas Secretariat, OAS

ANNEX II - CIVIL SOCIETY RECOMMENDATIONS

ROUNDTABLE ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION INCLUDING HEALTH, NUTRITION, EDUCATION, AND CRIME

Cross-Cutting Elements

1. Human development and poverty reduction should be tackled from a multi-sectoral approach (with the participation of sectors that have been historically marginalized by the system and that these policies are meant to target), and from a multidisciplinary approach, that includes the design, development, monitoring, and evaluation of public policies in each of the member states, whose commitment and political will are expressed in terms of resources, plans, and programs. These policies should have the following objectives:
 - a) To change social attitudes and prejudices that become stigmas, discrimination, and failure to act on the part of the government in power, and that lead to violence for reasons of race, national or ethnic origin, nationality, age, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, language, religion, social origin, socio-economic or political position, level of education, status as a migrant, refugee, or repatriated, stateless, or internally displaced person, or any other stigmatized condition, genetic characteristics, disabilities, mentally impaired condition, incarceration due to criminal behavior or confinement for reasons of insanity, or any other social condition. Promote integration and development of these sectors of the population.
 - b) To begin a structured transition to technology for clean, secure, and more efficient energy from renewable sources, using clean development models.
 - c) To promote the development of the rural, agrarian, and small farm sectors, with innovative proposals such as integral farms with appropriate technology, land titles, organization of communities and financing, and development of local production based on cooperativist values using entrepreneurial strategies. To promote programs to encourage professionals to work in rural areas and poor urban neighborhoods.
 - d) To promote the integration and development of persons who have paid their social debts by serving penal sentences, and foster prison programs that have been recognized as “good penitentiary and prison practices.” (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights - <http://br.uol.com.ar/noticias/policiales/2007/11/09/ult3150u14321.htm>, <http://www.cidh.org/Comunicados/Spanish/2007/56.07sp.htm>).
 - e) To consider and include HIV-AIDS as a public health problem.
 - f) To promote respect for diversity and celebrate it, as our countries have an unequalled wealth of diversity of all kinds, and we should celebrate it and legislate respect for it; we suggest that the need for the countries of our region to be secular should be suggested, so as to avoid conflicts in this area in future.
2. Foster a culture of peace in the region, by implementing nonrepressive, nonbellicose, and noninterventionist national and international policies and sanction states, groups, or persons that exhibit such behavior.
3. Create, foster, disseminate, and revitalize the entity in each country responsible for monitoring compliance with international agreements ratified by each state to date.
4. Encourage the participation of civil society in OAS national and regional processes, and to that end, the civil society office should promote thematic networks with groups from civil society, the private sector, and governments.
5. Introduce and include equitable, parity policies in the OAS that recognize women and marginalized sectors in our Hemisphere; it is recommended that the OAS ensure that all documents it produces are nonsexist and inclusive.

Social Development

6. Create public policies and, as in item one in the section on cross-cutting elements, ensure that governments show a political will to implement them by allocating resources, drawing up specific plans and implementation programs, with real time periods, in order to:
 - a) Approach migration from the standpoint of human rights, and seek ways to ensure social inclusion of migrants, refugees, and undocumented workers in every country;
 - b) Eliminate violence, including social, domestic, and gender violence, armed conflicts, sexual abuse and exploitation, against security systems, etc.
 - c) Promote innovative concepts in programs for the care and redistribution of resources, giving priority to rural communities to prevent uprooting and internal migration to the large urban centers or other countries, for example through community tourism, development of indigenous handicraft markets, and encouraging native cultural practices.
 - d) Create policies for the inclusion rather than the criminalization of poverty and youth, by initiating educational programs at all levels and in officially recognized technical and trade schools.
7. Create of a Civil Society Council comprising diverse sectors, without marginalizing or excluding any group, for the following purposes:
 - a) To design, plan, follow-up on, and monitor public policies;
 - b) To monitor compliance with international agreements.
8. Implement corporate responsibility programs through which the private sector would make real contributions to human development in countries. These contributions would be directed to:
 - a) Integral care for poor and/or marginalized urban and rural segments of the population;
 - b) Promotion of equitable access to micro-credits;
 - c) Social integration with economic and psycho-social support for socially excluded persons, such as former gang members, juvenile offenders, and displaced persons.

Health and Nutrition

9. Create policies and promote programs directed to reducing and/or eliminating infant morbidity and mortality in our countries, whether for reasons of malnutrition, hunger, or lack of access to medicines and hospital services in urban areas, with an emphasis on rural areas.
10. Devise and promote policies to develop programs guaranteeing consumption of local products as a priority over imports or products of less nutritional value. In addition, go back to the practice of breast-feeding as a food security strategy.
11. Promote cooperation among civil associations, universities, and the government in agricultural production that meets the requirements of food codes in the member states.
12. Ensure that indigenous peoples have access to basic health services, and access to basic food coverage through specific assistance (such as social dining halls).
13. Create real policies providing full access to universal, quality health services, including access to medicines, in all health programs.
14. Create policies in preventive health programs, especially for exposed population groups that do not have access to information and formal education.
15. Legislate to promote agricultural development policies that maximize the use of natural resources and encourage caution in using nonrenewable resources.
16. Ensure income distribution through community development programs that do not entail dependency on aid or clientelism.
17. Devise a regional structure for prevention in the area of health.
18. Develop preventive health and breast-feeding programs.
19. Promote a review of school curricula in the area of HIV/AIDS and sexual reproductive health, as a way of including preventive health programs and thus responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and undesired pregnancies, among other things.

20. Promote in different ministries the creation of ongoing education and refresher courses for health professionals who work with various population groups in different areas, thereby reducing stigmas and discrimination in their different forms and expressions.
21. Work constantly to reduce the cost of basic medicines and promote the development of local or regional manufacturing of these medicines.
22. Promote comprehensive special health programs especially for children and adolescents.
23. Avoid the use of resources for political purposes, and especially subsidies that go to cover unmet basic needs.
24. Promote implementation of mental health policies throughout the country, emphasizing treatment of persons who are confined in facilities other than prisons, including neuro-psychiatric establishments, therapeutic communities, rehabilitation centers, geriatric care facilities, etc.
25. Work on HIV/AIDS as a public health problem, and include this topic in different forums and agendas as a responsible government response to the impact of the epidemic in our countries.

Education

26. Define policies that guarantee the expansion of coverage and quality of school education, by promoting inclusion and deterring school drop-out.
27. Create sustainable youth education policies that favor a civic culture and participation in voluntary organizations and initiatives and vocational guidance, stressing the strengthening of democracy, social solidarity, cultural exchange, and adoption of growth models with high sustainability indices. Institutionalize the declaration of human rights in the school curricula.
28. In educational programs at different levels, define strategies based on norms for peaceful co-existence to disseminate values, thereby preventing violence both in schools and in families and communities.
29. Conduct educational campaigns on human rights and community exchange practices as well as against drug addiction and drug dependence while proposing other options.
30. Guarantee that education contributes to community development by forming social councils for community participation, with the participation of students, family members, teachers, and professionals, to prevent youth from being uprooted and leaving their communities because of a lack of opportunities and work.
31. Promote bilingual intercultural education so that indigenous peoples can keep their language and customs while at the same time they can integrate effectively into mixed societies. The laws of countries should be available in the relevant indigenous languages.

Criminality and Crime

32. Generate dynamic policies to deal with crime and prevent recidivism. Adopt unified criteria throughout the hemisphere for treatment and rehabilitation of prisoners, by promoting reform of the criminal and procedural codes of the member states.
33. Create successful rehabilitation programs for criminals in prisons, as well as for drug rehabilitation programs, and demilitarize prison systems.
34. Promote programs for insertion into the private sector, so that persons with judicial or mental problems, or persons with HIV/AIDS can be socially integrated and enjoy equal treatment and opportunities.
35. Generate preventive policies to combat sales of narcotics and drugs, and local and international drug trafficking.
36. Provide for a transparent system of justice in every country, speed up judicial proceedings, and monitor the situation of prisoners who have health problems or are terminally ill.
37. Streamline the processing for all types of crimes, and humanize confinement time, according to the standards determined in international agreements and conventions binding on member states.

38. Improve prison conditions in general, and provide for cells or confinement spaces differentiated on the basis of the crime, to avoid internal violence.
39. Fight trafficking in persons, both domestically and internationally, in its different forms, including commercial sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, and others.
40. Immediately adopt a common position on the minimum age for being charged with a crime, to prevent the unnecessary conviction of minors (cases of life sentences for minors).
41. Change the prison system for women, youth, pregnant women, or women heads of household with children, by providing for alternatives to prison sentences (probation, special provisions for good behavior, etc.).

Strengthening Civil Society

42. Create a virtual interactive civil society network from the pertinent office of the Organization of American States (OAS), to serve as a link among citizen initiatives in the Hemisphere, disseminate information on good practices, provide information on Summit agreements, and other relevant data.
43. Encourage OAS regional offices to promote meeting spaces on specific themes for governments, civil society, and the private sector, so as to foster mutual understanding, possible coordination of activities, creation of coalitions, political agendas, and other types of exchange initiatives that will facilitate coordinated action. These regional initiatives could also help disseminate institutional information of interest to governments and citizens, and implement consultative activities.
44. Create in the OAS a permanent civil society forum, to ensure repeated, dynamic, broad, and diverse consultations.

ROUNDTABLE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH AND COMPETITIVENESS

Overall Objectives

1. Promote the development of new policies to increase competitiveness and therefore the GDP, reducing inequality, involving low-income groups and opportunities in each country, according to market requirements.
2. Guarantee economic and social policies for sustained growth with equity and social justice, taking into consideration environmental sustainability, as well as energy and food security.
3. Recognize civil society in its entirety, taking into account the productive and labor sectors, community leaders, professionals, women's organizations, young people, cooperative enterprises, SMEs, and every type of association.

Economic policy

4. Improve their tax collection mechanisms, strengthening laws to fight tax evasion.
5. Carry out public spending in an efficient and transparent manner, reporting on how it is administered.
6. Establish a transparent legal and regulatory framework, guaranteeing citizens' access to government information.
7. Stimulate investment from within and without by establishing effective means of preventing capital flight as a way to encourage domestic investors and motivate foreign investors.
8. Commit to increasing the efficient, transparent execution of public spending geared toward sanitary infrastructure (drinking water, sewage, and solid waste systems) and basic infrastructure in the areas of port and airport roads, telecommunications, health, education, and electricity.
9. Establish policies to guarantee credit access conditions that promote microfinance lending by international organizations, mostly to vulnerable and at-risk groups.

10. Promote the development and strengthening of the social economy, specifically cooperative enterprises and SMEs, as provided in ILO recommendation 193, as a way to generate decent jobs and sustainable enterprises, and facilitate their operation through a legal framework that allows them to be competitive in all economic sectors.
11. Promote self-employment opportunities for youth and women, designing training programs for new entrepreneurs, coordinating the public, private, and academic sectors, and implementing government policies on education, business skills training, technical training, and programs that facilitate access to financing.
12. Establish a transparent legal framework that generates confidence and stability through economic, administrative, and legal measures to reduce country risk as much as possible, geared toward sustainable economic development.
13. Promote the incorporation of the fight against corruption into corporate social responsibility initiatives.
14. Commit to promoting a culture of national consultation on matters of national importance, through means that ensure civil society participation in decision-making.
15. Promote regulatory mechanisms to govern business competition, geared toward promoting transparency and ethics in business and preventing monopolies and unfair competition.
16. Promote means of evaluating government administration and local government, to be administered by civil society, in its social oversight role, on the basis of specific indicators, such as degrees of access to information, cases of corruption, percentage of social investment in public spending law, degrees of efficacy of social policy, levels of current expenditures earmarked in public spending law, and reporting of accounts.
17. Promote efficient science and technology suited to each country's circumstances.

Social policy

18. Promote inclusion of young people and women from vulnerable and at-risk groups in formal primary and secondary education, ensuring a legal framework consistent with market demand to improve national competitiveness.
19. Promote specific policies, programs, and measures to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable population groups (afro-descendants, women, youth, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, immigrants), taking into account ethnic and gender diversity.
20. Include civil society organizations in the negotiation of international trade agreements and treaties.
21. Include policies geared toward the elder years and retirement of workers and non-workers, as well as high-quality health services, to guarantee healthy human resources for national development.

ROUNDTABLE ON ENERGY SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL DISASTERS

1. Increase the investment in science and technology to a minimum of 1% of GDP by 2012. The public element should be allocated according to clear priorities for national development. The private element should be generated by stimulating investment in research and development, and technological dissemination by providing incentives and removing barriers for both domestic and foreign investment.
2. Encourage the development and universal access to modern and efficient low carbon energy generation and distribution systems, including intelligent grids and smart metering to encourage the development of new local sources, the development of more efficient energy markets.
3. Make planning, zoning and regulatory frameworks simpler, more coherent, transparent and effective by 2012. Harmonize requirements for energy and environmental developments and base these on international codes of best practice for the energy and extractive industries in compliance with extractive industries' transparency initiative and for the new biofuel industries. Provide

appropriate transition periods and training programs for local firms to assist them to modernize their business models and technologies in order to meet international standards.

4. Provide by 2012 universal access to accurate, reliable and impartial technical information on energy, environmental and climate change issues through the more effective networking of existing institutions within Latin America and the Caribbean region and by the creation of a new central website through which people can find information in an accessible form on environmental indicators, new proposals and case studies on cleaner technologies, early warning systems and natural disaster preparedness.
5. Increase public awareness on energy and environmental issues, primarily through education, including the creation of a youth constituency in the Hemisphere, with an emphasis on practical solutions in areas such as energy, water, waste and sustainable land management, energy saving, good environmental practice, how to prepare for disasters and how to respond to climate change.
6. Promote the involvement of indigenous peoples, afro-descendants, and women in policies and programs on energy and environmental sustainability.

ROUND TABLE ON DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Introductory Statement

1. We agree on the need to bring to the attention of the government authorities of Trinidad and Tobago, the host country of the upcoming Fifth Summit of the Americas, and through them all the governments of the OAS, our concerns about the urgency of strengthening democratic institutions as an essential means for achieving development and human prosperity, with equity and in harmony with nature, a fundamental concern of our organizations.
2. This strengthening must involve the intimately related spheres of representative democracy, participatory democracy, and the inter-American system.
3. In the sphere of representative democracy, the representatives of the organizations present declare their concern with respect to:
 - a) The excessively "presidential" approach to government, which obstructs the exercise of democracy as it relates to the separation of powers.
 - b) Concern as well over the weak exercise of legitimate competition between political parties, and the limits on the peaceful change of government.
 - c) Concern at political cronyism and the lack of transparency and accountability in the financing of political campaigns and the parties themselves, which end up in thrall to particular interests.
 - d) This situation results in the weakening of parliamentary or legislative systems and the loss of legitimacy and credibility for the political parties themselves.
 - e) The low level of independence and effectiveness of the judicial system, in its relations to the other branches of government, as well as in containing the alarming growth of organized crime, which has permeated not only government structures but social structures as well.
 - f) The lack of progress in decentralization and the strengthening of local governments, particularly with respect to their levels of autonomy, the effective transfer of responsibilities by the central government, strengthening legislation to guarantee decentralization, and strengthening communities' capacities and their effective participation.
4. These weaknesses of representative democracy are compounded by phenomena and practices that are deeply entrenched and very alarming:
 - a) First, through corruption and impunity.
 - b) Second, by the fact that there is little or no transparency in government affairs.

- c) There is little in the way of a "public ethic" in the exercise of government.
 - d) When it comes to the citizens and their organizations, there is no culture of consultation, of consensus building, and in particular of accountability, nor is there any effective oversight of public policies, and their results and efficiency.
5. With respect to participatory democracy, we start from the principle that assuring a better future for the peoples of the hemisphere is a shared task of governments and civil society, which means that its future is compromised in the absence of joint political commitments and an appropriate institutional structure.
6. Consequently, with respect to participatory democracy we are concerned at the discrepancy between public statements and actual practice. In this respect, we identify:
- a) Lack of recognition, encouragement, effective development and strengthening of a culture of social dialogue, of consultation processes, and of concrete instances of citizen participation in the entire policy-making process, i.e. in identifying, executing, monitoring and assessing those policies.
 - b) The need to strengthen citizenship, and in particular to provide education through formal and informal channels, for the understanding and exercise of human rights and of democracy, and in particular for the real and effective practice of rights and the responsibilities of participation.
 - c) The lack of properly instituted and regulated forums with clearly identified procedures for citizen participation.
 - d) The urgency of having clear policies for strengthening and protecting networks of social organizations, intended not to co-opt them in support of the governing parties or politicians of the day, but rather to allow them to respond to the legitimate aspirations of population groups, productive sectors, organizations that promote and defend human rights, labor and environmental organizations, or segments of the community and their umbrella civil society organizations.
 - e) The need for effective development and institutionalization of the instruments of citizen participation, such as free association, access to information, freedom of expression, instruments for social oversight and monitoring, and access to justice.
7. All these resources rely on the principle of and aspiration for social dialogue and inclusion, as substantive strengths for democratic governance and consequently for strengthening modern and solid political institutions, supported by respect for human rights in all their dimensions.
8. The meaning and purpose of democracy is to achieve prosperity and human development, peaceful coexistence and justice, and the eradication of all forms of exploitation.
9. Democracy must be supported through recognition of diversity and nondiscrimination on grounds of ethnic group, sex, sexual orientation, or disability.
10. We also point out that, when we speak of the quality of democracy, we are referring to the quality of life, the freedom and dignity of the individual, and each person's right to a life free of violence.
11. With respect to the inter-American system, participants in this roundtable stress the urgency of the following:
- a) Not wasting efforts on identifying new mandates, but rather channeling efforts into assessing achievements and shortcomings with respect to the mandates from the four regular Summits and two special Summits that have been held to date, and which in fact have been targeted at the purpose for which the Fifth Summit has been convened.
 - b) Adopt measures and resources for assessment and follow-up of Summit agreements, enlisting in support the monitoring efforts of civil society organizations of the Americas, for the purpose of presenting this assessment of results to the Fifth Summit in Trinidad and Tobago.
 - c) Revise and reinforce the conventions against discrimination, particularly for reasons of race, gender and sexual orientation, as well as the oversight mechanisms of the Inter-American system.

- d) Create a joint commission of civil society organizations concerned with the hemispheric system and the Summits office, to identify the best way of consulting civil society and giving it effective participation, both in the Summits and in the inter-American system as a whole, and especially the OAS.

Recognizing

1. That the spaces for consultation with civil society that the OAS has created both for the General Assemblies and for the Summits of the Americas, covering all the countries in the region with the sole exception of Cuba, are laudable and unique, but insufficient, and they must therefore be improved and expanded.
2. That one of the most notable achievements of these consultations and shared working procedures was the approval of the Inter-American Democratic Charter on September 11, 2001, which establishes and recognizes democracy as a fundamental human right which governments must promote and defend. It also declares that the participatory nature of democracy in different aspects of public life contributes to consolidating democratic values and to freedom and solidarity in the hemisphere.
3. That official corruption is a most damaging practice, which generates cynicism and disrespect for democracy and its institutions and undermines the elementary basic rights of access to health, education, housing and work.
4. The importance of processes for overseeing the systems for the protection and defense of human rights and for fostering freedom.
5. That it is essential to combat and prevent the erosion (and the yielding) of freedom in the name of security: "He who yields part of his freedom in exchange for a little security deserves neither".
6. That the four previous Summits (Miami 1994, Santiago 1998, Quebec City 2001, Mar del Plata 2005) and the two special Summits of Santa Cruz de the Sierra 1996 and Monterrey 2004 have produced dozens of mandates or statements, and then there is no monitoring system for evaluating their results and assuring society that they will be fulfilled.

Assessment

The organizations that have been monitoring compliance with the Summit commitments recall that, in principle, the agreements and mandates from the Summits of the Americas are more binding than resolutions of the OAS General Assembly. In their monitoring work, they have identified the following weaknesses, among others:

1. There is very little governmental monitoring of the commitments issued from the Summits.
2. There are few officials in the foreign offices who understand the process and its implementation.
3. Changes of government affect the continuity and implementation of mandates.
4. States in general do not submit reports on how they are complying with the mandates, and when they do so the reports are imprecise and have not been validated or put to consultation with their respective societies.
5. Few mandates are measurable, and for those that are no mechanisms have been established for measuring them.
6. There does not seem to be any real and effective interest of the part of states to address the structural problems of the Americas.

We Propose

1. Translate the Summit mandates into specific obligations, administrative measures or realistic, measurable and enforceable policies, and that they should share these with civil society.

2. That governments should assume their responsibility and adopt administrative, legal or policy measures to give effect to all the provisions of the American Convention against Corruption, approved in 1996 and ratified to date by 33 countries.
3. That the Secretariat of the Fifth Summit should take the necessary measures to ensure that this forum is not distorted and used to debate political disputes and issues not related to those for which it was convened.
4. To conduct prior consultations by state representatives with the civil society of their respective countries on the proposals they bring to the Summits, and on the Summits process. Establish a regular practice of formal, prior consultations by state representatives with the civil society of their respective countries on the proposals they bring to the Summits, and on the Summits process.
5. To establish a scorecard mechanism for the hemisphere, with the effective participation of civil society, on fulfillment of the mandates from the four regular Summits and two special Summits held since 1994.
6. To keep civil society informed about the mandates and the commitments acquired at each Summit, and submit them to public discussion.
7. To organize and formalize a forum that allows the representatives of civil society to present and analyze their proposals with government representatives immediately prior to the Summits.
8. To request states to report to the Summits on how they have fulfilled and are fulfilling the previous mandates.
9. To use, as a model for monitoring compliance with the Summit mandates, the methodology developed by the inter-American network of civil society organizations.
10. Not to view social problems and challenges as merely the result of the energy crisis, but to take into consideration other political, economic and social variables.
11. In order to reinforce citizenship, encourage participation and strengthen democracy, education in democratic values and practices should be built into the formal education systems, including study and analysis of the inter-American system and the Summits process.
12. The agenda for the Fifth Summit should include express reiteration of the commitment of all states to the Inter-American Democratic Charter and to the mandates of the previous Summits.
13. States should commit themselves to institutionalize national forums between governments and civil society for the effective oversight of compliance with the commitments acquired at each Summit.
14. To recognize expressly, as a fundamental feature of representative democracy, the inclusion of all peoples and nations that make up the population of our countries. The OAS General Assembly should adopt and give effect to the forum of indigenous peoples and aboriginal nations in the OAS, proposed at the 2005 Mar del Plata Summit.
15. To issue a call for the real and effective commitment of states to make it a priority task of governments to strengthen freedom of expression and access to information, pursuant to the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, the jurisprudence created by the advisory opinions and judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and the resolutions, actions and declarations of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.
16. To promote the adoption by states of the Atlanta Declaration and its Plan of Action for advancing the right of access to information, recognizing its importance for democratic governance and for combating corruption.
17. To commit states to adopt, expressly and without delay, measures and actions as appropriate to secure signature, accession or ratification of the various international instruments against corruption, including the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, the mechanism for monitoring the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC), and the United Nations Convention against Corruption.
18. States of the hemisphere should commit themselves to enforcing the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, to observing and complying with the recommendations of the MESICIC, and to allowing civil society to participate fully in this monitoring and in the Committee of Experts.

19. To urge member states taking part in the next conference of states parties to be held in Qatar in 2009 to adopt an evaluation mechanism to ensure enforcement of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.
20. To ask states to review the rules and provisions regulating political parties, their funding, and the financing of electoral campaigns, and that they consider adopting the necessary reforms to make political parties more democratic, taking into account women's participation, in the election of party leadership and of candidates for elected positions.
21. To promote ratification of the International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families.
22. To promote compliance by Central American countries with the Guatemala Declaration for a Corruption-Free Region, signed in November 2006, which proposes and promises effective and decisive action to achieve concrete results in combating corruption by the year 2009, and to urge other states of the hemisphere to conform to that declaration.
23. To urge the United States and Canada to ratify the American Convention on Human Rights, so that the hemispheric system for the protection of Human Rights will be effectively inter-American, and not essentially Latin American.
24. For the comprehensive reinforcement of the inter-American system, to request the host government of Trinidad and Tobago to rejoin the inter-American system for the protection of human rights, from which it withdrew in 1998.
25. To call upon states to give effective enforcement to the judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, only 6% of judgments have been enforced fully and 24% partially.

Specific Recommendations

Recognizing that adequate citizen participation and political representation constitute the bases of democracy and that local governments have a daily direct impact on the life of their citizens, we propose:

1. To promote mechanisms to facilitate citizen participation in political life, especially at the local level, and in municipal governments.
2. To promote the development, autonomy and institutional strengthening of local governments to foster conditions favorable to the sustainable economic and social development of their communities. The measurable aspects of these proposals are:
 - a) The degree of autonomy of local governments.
 - b) General legal amendments to encourage the decentralization process.
 - c) Citizen participation in local government.
3. With respect to the Fifth Summit theme, establish the relationship between discrimination based on gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, disabilities, indigenous populations, migrant status, vis-à-vis situations of poverty, difficulties of access to justice, to information, and to other human rights for the affected groups.
4. At the express request of the Latin American Federation of Rural Women, Cuba Chapter, to urge compliance with article 4 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.
5. To reaffirm the commitment of states to facilitate and enhance women's participation in publicly elected office, with a view to achieving a 50-50 share by the year 2015.

ANNEX III - LIST OF CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPANTS

Argentina

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Barbados Youth Business Trust

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United Belize Advocacy Movement

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Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology

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Clarissa Carvalho*

*Gestos - Soropositividade, Comunicação e
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Saint Lucia

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The Aldet Centre - Saint Lucia

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Rorel J. Ritfeld
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International Education and Resource Network

Hazel Brown*
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Marcelo Varela*
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Carlos Quesada*
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Global Rights

Alex Easdale
Hispanics in Philanthropy

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Partners of the Americas

Jean-Robert Lafortune
Yves Morisseau
Haitian-American Grassroots Coalition

Laura Kimes
American Council on Renewable Energy and Latin American & Caribbean Council on Renewable Energy

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Shirley Solomon
Everest University

Michael Díaz
Sunshine Cathedral

Rev. Elder Darlene Garner
Metropolitan Community Churches

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Aixa Armas
Alejandro Armas
Asociación Civil Espacio Civil

* Beneficiario de financiación de viaje /
Beneficiary of travel award

+ Invitación declinada / Invitation declined

ANNEX IV - REMARKS

AMBASSADOR HECTOR MORALES NATIONAL SUMMIT COORDINATOR OF THE UNITED STATES

Thank you for the kind introduction. Let me begin by thanking Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez and his staff; Assistant Secretary General of the OAS Albert Ramdin; David Morris, Director of the OAS Summit Secretariat, as well as his diligent staff for their efforts in organizing this forum. I also would like to acknowledge the constructive work which Ambassador Marina Valere, Trinidad and Tobago's former Ambassador to the U.S. and Permanent Representative to the OAS, accomplished as Chair of the OAS Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities (CISC). Similarly, I extend a warm welcome to Trinidad and Tobago's new Ambassador to the U.S. and its Permanent Representative, Ambassador Glenda Morean Phillip. I look forward to working with you, Ambassador.

In fact, with the active participation of many of you here today, Ambassador Valere and David were able to organize a well-received Special OAS Permanent Council meeting last month addressing the role of civil society in strengthening democracy and promoting human rights. The United States was pleased to have sponsored the resolution mandating that meeting at last year's OAS General Assembly.

I believe these opportunities for discussion and dialogue are critically important as we look toward our OAS General Assembly next month in Medellin, Colombia, which will focus on the theme of "Youth and Democratic Values," and the 2009 Summit of the Americas, whose theme is "Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security, and Environmental Sustainability."

With this in mind, I want to give credit where it is due by recognizing the work of Trinidad and Tobago's summit team in bringing civil society to Miami a full year in advance of the summit to discuss the draft declaration, led by my good friend and former colleague at the IDB Luis Alberto Rodriguez—it is great and I am honored to have the opportunity to work again on such an important endeavor. This is really unprecedented for civil society engagement on the Summits process. Convoing this gathering here today is a testament to Trinidad & Tobago's understanding of the critical role of civil society as full stakeholders in this process.

The Summits of the Americas have become the hemisphere's premier multilateral forum to spur effective action in addressing shared social, economic, and political challenges facing our hemisphere. The 2009 Summit of the Americas will be an opportunity for the next U.S. Administration, working with its partners in the OAS, and with the strong leadership of Trinidad and Tobago to build upon this and previous Administration achievements. The task will be to build on Summit successes and develop bold initiatives that deliver concrete, measurable results in support of our common hemispheric agenda.

My brief comments today underscore the essential role which civil society organizations play in the defense of fundamental freedoms and the promotion of democracy and economic development in the Americas. As Secretary of State Rice has noted, "often at personal risk and against great odds, nongovernmental organizations ... advocate for human rights and expose abuses. They are building vibrant civil societies, pressing for free and fair elections and establishing accountable, law-based democracies."

In our strong support for civil society, the United States is standing up for what President Bush has called "the non-negotiable demands of human dignity." This includes the exercise by individuals of their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly through their membership in civil society organizations. In short, we are defending the defenders of human rights and fundamental freedoms and pushing back against those in power who do not welcome civil society and other agents of peaceful, democratic change.

As a key element in this effort, the United States is committed to a set of principles which Secretary Rice unveiled in December 2006 which define the way responsible governments should behave in relation to non-governmental organizations. One key principle worth underscoring here is that governmental "laws and administrative measures should protect--not impede--the peaceful operation of NGOs and be enforced in an apolitical, fair, transparent and consistent manner." A second principle is that "NGOs should be permitted to seek, receive, manage and administer for their peaceful activities financial support from domestic, foreign and international entities." These principles have gained traction in the Hemisphere and some governments have supported and endorsed them.

Your presence here today, as our region begins to prepare for the next Summit of our region's democratically-elected heads of government, sends a powerful message across our hemisphere of the determination of civil society to engage actively in the decisions that will shape the future course of the Americas. It is imperative that we, as governments, empower you to do so and to listen to your voice. During my time working in development at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) – and now as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the OAS and National Coordinator for the Summit of the Americas -- I have had the privilege of meeting with many civil society organizations, both here and abroad, and have greatly benefited from their information, their insights and their ideas.

I have learned that, together with the increasing worldwide demand for greater personal and political freedom often reflected in the work of civil society organizations, there is also a growing recognition that representative democracy truly is the form of government that can best meet the demands of citizens for dignity, liberty, and equality.

At the same time, we also know that citizens want to have confidence that their democracies are helping them to obtain benefits, in social as well as economic terms. This concern was reflected in the recent White House Conference on the Americas, hosted by President and Mrs. Bush last July. This event focused on the sharing of best practices in support of social justice and grassroots-level engagement, and included representatives of 150 regional-based organizations and 100 U.S. groups.

In reflecting upon President Bush's call at that conference for us "to discuss how we can work together to promote social justice and help people realize a better life," I see the real question before us in advance of the Summit – OAS member states and civil society alike – as not whether governments are from the left or the right, but are democratically elected governments governing democratically and engendering opportunities for its citizens' prosperity?

The role which you, civil society, can play in response to this question lies with your ability to hold governments accountable to "deliver the benefits of democracy" efficiently and effectively. After all, the work of civil society varies widely, but what all of your organizations have in common is the enabling capacity to bring individuals together to create an independent voice distinct from, and at times in disagreement with, governmental views. And so, in this 60th anniversary year of the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the OAS Charter and the American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, it is important for us to recall that respect for fundamental freedoms and diversity of opinion is contingent upon our governments' continued pursuit of the ideals affirmed in these documents.

In today's world, the problems confronting states are too complex even for the most powerful states to tackle alone. In order to address these problems effectively, we need to be challenged as governments -- to spur change and to force us to consider new approaches—individually and collectively. This is because we share so many challenges throughout the Hemisphere. But challenges also represent opportunities. As governments look to the next Summit, we have the opportunity—and I would argue must-- must work together with your organizations to remain focused on finding concrete, tangible, and democratic solutions to improve our citizens' futures and meet the expectations and demands of our citizens.

President Bush has said that "Freedom, by its nature, must be chosen, and defended by citizens, and sustained by the rule of law and the protection of minorities. ... America will not impose our own style of government on the unwilling. Our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their own way." Through leadership of the United States in supporting and defending the work of civil society, that is exactly what we are doing -- helping men and women across the globe shape their own destinies in freedom, and by so doing, helping to build a safer, better and more just world for us all.

Thank you again to the hard work that Trinidad and Tobago and its terrific team has done—there is so much more to do and I thank you for giving me your attention. I look forward to engaging with you in the coming months as we come together to address shared issues so critical to us, our families, our communities, and our nations to make the Fifth Summit the success we all want it to be.

AMBASSADOR GLENDA MOREAN PHILLIP
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO THE
OAS AND CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTER-AMERICAN SUMMITS MANAGEMENT
AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN OAS ACTIVITIES

It is a distinct pleasure to be here today at the start of this very important hemispheric forum on the theme for the Fifth Summit of the Americas - "Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability". As the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the OAS and as the new Chair of the Inter-American Committee on Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities, better known as the CISC, it is extremely gratifying to see so many civil society organizations representing citizens from every corner of this hemisphere but then I expect nothing less in a world where private public partnering is becoming the norm. The process towards the Fifth Summit in Port of Spain in April next year is that much richer as a result of your participation.

I know that Trinidad and Tobago's National Summit Coordinator will elaborate more on this area but, suffice it to say, that from the onset of our chairmanship of the Summits process, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago undertook to consult with all our hemispheric partners, and as such, was resolved to convene a forum with civil society exclusively to hear the views of the citizens of the hemisphere, through their representatives. The opportunity now presents itself over the next two days for the fears, concerns, hopes and aspirations of your organizations, your families, neighbors and compatriots to be channeled into this hemispheric process, a process that will culminate in the watershed meeting in my country of the thirty-four democratically elected leaders of the region.

The OAS, as the foremost political institution in the Americas, provides a natural space for our countries to interface with each other and with other key actors. As many of you are aware, the Organization of American States remains committed to engaging civil society on many of the issues under its remit – human rights, anti-corruption, sustainable development and culture to name but a few. Both the OAS Charter and the Inter-American Democratic Charter point to hemispheric

cooperation as essential for the development of all countries and encourage the participation of citizens in matters related to their well-being. Additionally, the Democratic Charter clearly outlines the link between democracy and prosperity as recorded in article eleven (11) of that Charter “Democracy and social and economic development are interdependent and are mutually reinforcing.”

In recognition of the importance of forging a spirit of cooperation with all hemispheric actors, the OAS continues to provide and/or facilitate the exchange of views and the sharing of best practices with civil society representatives. My predecessor, the former Chairperson of the CISC, was high in commendation for the valuable insights and recommendations which emanated from this year’s Hemispheric Forum with Civil Society on “Youth and Democratic Values” the theme for the 38th OAS General Assembly to be held in Medellín, Colombia.

Civil society’s unique perspective is a vital contribution to any hemispheric endeavor, and I dare say any endeavor, geared at our collective development, particularly as it is a reflection of the everyday experiences of the man/woman/child in the street, the obstacles they face and the projects, programs and policies that help to overcome these challenges and bring progress. This tangible, pragmatic element is surely what underscored the statement by the then Foreign Minister of Trinidad and Tobago at last year’s General Assembly in Panama that “Civil society is increasingly being recognized as an integral pillar on which our democracies and development processes are built.”

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I am certain that the presentation on the thematic underpinnings of the Fifth Summit as well as the Roundtable discussions and plenary sessions will be stimulating. I wish you fruitful discussions which will result in invaluable recommendations.

Before closing, I recognize that this forum would not have come to fruition in the timeframe envisaged were it not for the vision and hard work of Trinidad and Tobago’s National Summit Secretariat, the ongoing support and contribution of resources of the Government of the United States, the equally hard-working OAS Summits Secretariat and the interest and commitment of the participants. I wish to commend you all for your efforts.

AMBASSADOR ALBERT RAMDIN
ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

It is indeed a pleasure to join you today at the inauguration of the Civil Society Hemispheric Forum and to extend to all participants a most sincere and warm welcome to this Forum. I am particularly delighted to welcome the representatives of civil society organizations, who have shown their keen interest in taking part in what I hope will be an open, frank, honest and transparent dialogue.

Allow me, at the outset, to recognize the collective efforts and collaboration of the National Secretariat of Trinidad and Tobago and the OAS Summits Secretariat, and in particular, the generous funding support received from USAID, the US State Department, the Open Society Institute, the Inter-American Foundation and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which has enabled the organization of this Forum. I have no doubt that it will provide a constructive platform for dialogue and inclusiveness. Needless to say that I look forward to the continued support and engagement of these institutions and countries in the process towards the V Summit of the Americas, less than a year from now to be held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Indeed, it has been a great honour for the OAS to facilitate and provide support to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in the convening of this Civil Society Hemispheric Forum to address the theme of the Fifth Summit of the Americas: “Securing our Citizens’ Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability”. We believe, as does the Government of Trinidad

and Tobago, that it is important to guarantee an adequate space for civil society to express their aspirations and perspectives, not only to Governments but to the public at large.

This Forum is rooted in the exercise of democracy in the public interest. As Article 6 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter states: *“It is the right and responsibility of all citizens to participate in decisions relating to their own development. This is also a necessary condition for the full and effective exercise of democracy. Promoting and fostering diverse forms of participation strengthens democracy.”*

The OAS leadership firmly believes in a collective and inclusive approach in making and executing policy. That is why the OAS has institutionalized mechanisms for on-going dialogue and consultation with civil society organizations. We have indeed come a long way. That is why I am here today to demonstrate this commitment and that is why I participated in mid March on several occasions in the OAS “Partnering with civil society” program in Washington DC. We not only welcome these opportunities to engage with you, but more importantly like to hear from you, listen to your views, analyses, concerns and suggestions for change. In the end, we all are in some form or fashion members of civil society at large.

We believe that this Forum is a clear example of the progress that has been made in institutionalizing the partnership between civil society and the Summits of the Americas process. I believe that this type of dialogue and the discussions and debates engendered, can only serve to enrich the work of our Governments, because governments alone cannot achieve peaceful societies, stable democracies and prosperous economies. There is a responsibility for all in society to contribute to these critical objectives. Development, peace and security issues concern all of us and therefore represent a shared and collective responsibility of all in our countries and in the Americas. In this respect, I fully expect that the presentation of diverse perspectives on the issues and challenges confronting our societies, as we approach the Fifth Summit of the Americas in April 2009, will go a long way towards informing the preparations of the host country of the Summit and indeed, of all the participating nations of the Hemisphere.

A robust dialogue over the next two days will serve as a milestone in the hemispheric commitment to put people at the centre of our preoccupations. We therefore embark upon this dialogue with the firm conviction that we need to foster open and inclusive interaction with due respect for the opinions and views of all our partners.

The proposals and recommendations that will be put forth in the course of this Forum will undoubtedly reinforce our sense of community in the Americas. We believe this is a way of shaping, with concrete actions, a Summit process that will truly reflect the preoccupations and priorities of the peoples of the Americas.

In the framework of the Summits of the Americas, the Heads of States and Government, the institutions of the Inter-American System and Civil Society Organizations are working towards the coordination of efforts to build modern, democratic States in the global economy, in order to satisfy the needs and demands of all the citizens of the Americas. The Summit Process therefore reflects a collective approach to regional governance, through the setting of common goals and a quest for a harmonized and coordinated response to the problems and challenges facing the Hemisphere.

The challenges we face today are global in nature and they affect us all. The challenges we face are enormous and some are unprecedented. They demand a coherent, strategic response. Hemispheric security, migration, human rights, environmental sustainability, food security, energy security, poverty and inequity, and democratic governance, all call for a common approach in order to achieve constructive change and progress. The Fifth Summit of the Americas will not by any means solve all

these problems. But the Summit and this preparatory, consultative process should ensure that the highest elected authorities of our countries will seize upon the urgency of these challenges and make a commitment to move forward together with concrete, results-driven and people-centred actions to make a real difference in the lives of the peoples of the Americas.

I therefore say to the representatives of Civil Society gathered here in Miami: we need your voice, your energy and your conviction in order to make this happen.

In closing, I wish to recognize and express my appreciation for the commitment of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, especially the Hon. Patrick Manning for his vision for hosting the Fifth Summit of the Americas. I commend the National Secretariat of Trinidad and Tobago and in particular, its National Coordinator and Special Envoy to the Americas, Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, for their dedication to engaging in a consultative approach to framing the agenda and Declaration of Commitment of the Fifth Summit of the Americas.

This Forum is indicative of the host government's desire to give you, the representatives of civil society, the opportunity to share your perspectives and priorities pertaining to the Summit themes. While there can be no assurances that everything expressed by participants will find its way into the final Declaration, this Forum itself is a clear demonstration of the interest and commitment of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the Member States of the OAS and the OAS General Secretariat to engage with civil society in moving towards a successful Fifth Summit of the Americas. I am convinced that your views will be a valuable contribution to be considered in the drafting of the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

AMBASSADOR LUIS ALBERTO RODRIGUEZ
NATIONAL COORDINATOR AND SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE AMERICAS OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

It is extremely gratifying for me to address this distinguished gathering of civil society representatives who come from all parts of our Hemisphere and who, very importantly, are the voices of the many diverse groups of our citizens – the heart and soul of the Americas. This Civil Society Hemispheric Forum is a significant milestone in the preparations for the Fifth Summit of the Americas which will be held in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in April, 2009. From the very outset of assuming the chairmanship of the Summit Process, Trinidad and Tobago has repeatedly expressed its commitment to ensuring that the Fifth Summit is people focused and inclusive, with the widest possible participation of the citizens of our Hemisphere.

The theme that we have selected for the Fifth Summit – ‘Securing Our Citizens’ Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability’ is the strongest demonstration of our commitment. And, this Forum, which has been integral to our plans from the inception, is another important step towards the same end.

Our commitment is grounded in the belief that civil society organizations can contribute in a significant way to monitoring the implementation of mandates agreed to within the framework of the Summits of the Americas process, and to the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes at the national level. We are open to your ideas and your recommendations, as they will serve only to enrich the work that we do. We are very pleased to provide you with the opportunity, through this Forum, for the sharing of knowledge and experiences and for fostering a process of dialogue which will help to frame the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain.

At this point, I take the opportunity to express my most sincere appreciation to the Organisation of American States (OAS) – to Secretary-General Insulza and to you Assistant Secretary General Ramdin for the support you have given to Trinidad and Tobago. I especially want to thank David Morris and his team from the Summits of the Americas Secretariat for their contributions in organizing this Forum.

Allow me to also give recognition to the United States Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Inter-American Foundation (IAF), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Open Society Institute for identifying with our vision and for so readily agreeing to support the efforts of Trinidad and Tobago in making this Forum a reality.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, thus far, preparations for the Fifth Summit have coalesced around a strategy of consensus-building. We have strived to incorporate the perspectives and experiences of the widest cross section of actors across the Hemisphere. In developing the theme of the Fifth Summit, and the Concept Paper, we consulted widely – with Member States, with members of the Joint Summit Working Group, and with Hemispheric Civil Society organizations. We listened carefully to your views, examined all of your contributions, and included your recommendations in the Concept Paper, which was presented to Member States of the Organisation of American States (OAS) by the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at a Special Session of the Permanent Council of the OAS on April 9. I give you our full assurance today that Trinidad and Tobago will continue to engage all actors in a meaningful way, in every phase of the process leading up to April, 2009.

We have taken the responsibility of not only ensuring that all voices are represented, but that a collective vision for the Americas reaches out and connects with all the peoples of the hemisphere, especially the most vulnerable. We envision a future in which all our citizens have the opportunity to participate fully in society, to benefit from economic development and growth, and to enjoy peace, security and prosperity in their daily lives.

The First Summit of the Americas was held here, in Miami in 1994, and since then, we have been engaged in discussions to find solutions to the social and economic issues of concern to the Hemisphere. The Summits Process has produced a long list of themes and hundreds of mandates, all developed with the good intentions of improving the quality of life and the well being of the peoples of the Region. However, to date, we are still a long way from realizing our goal. While some progress has been made, the disturbing reality is that Latin America and the Caribbean has the highest level of inequality in the world.

For too many of our citizens, life in the Americas is unforgiving. Just under 100 million live in extreme poverty (defined as less than \$1.06/day, World Bank); 400 million say that they suffer some form of discrimination (Latinbarometro 2006), 22 million youth are neither studying nor working and therefore have limited prospects (ILO); 1.3 million of our children receive no education beyond primary level. (UNESCO); and 67% of Latin Americans report that they fear being out of work in the next 12 months (Latinbarometro 2006).

The situation has become even more tenuous in recent times. Rising food prices and food security are now a major issue for our Region, and indeed the world. Price increases have been particularly steep in the last 12 months, with the cost of corn, wheat, rice and oilseeds rising as much as 100% in some cases. ECLAC research indicates that since 2006, food consumer price indices have risen at an average annual rate of 15% in the region's economies. It is projected that this rise will have severe consequences causing another 15.7 million citizens to fall into destitution.

Another alarming trend is that non-Communicable diseases have become the leading cause of mortality in the Caribbean, causing 10 times more deaths than HIV/AIDS. In Latin America and the Caribbean we spend US\$65 billions a year to treat with diabetes.

We also cannot ignore the challenges of energy security, crime, violence, as well as the threats of natural disasters and climate change.

The task of overcoming these challenges is a collective one, for our Governments, for our institutions and for you civil society representatives. The important question for all of us is this, 'What can we do, collectively and individually, to ensure that the Summit process has a greater and more meaningful impact?'

We must not lose sight of the fact that people are at the heart of the development process. As host, Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the opportunity to serve the people of the Americas. Our foremost objective must therefore be to develop responses that are relevant to their needs and that will make a positive difference in their lives.

The Fifth Summit must also focus on implementation and on achieving the development outcomes envisioned during the deliberations of our Heads of State and Government. In order to achieve these objectives, the Fifth Summit must revive previous commitments to deepening integration and cooperation among member states and regional institutions.

We must view the Fifth Summit as an opportunity to learn from the experiences of the past - consolidate the gains of the past Summits, and forge ahead with renewed hope to chart a course towards achieving the desired results. Despite the many pervasive problems of poverty and inequality, we must maintain a positive outlook for the future. Here in the region, we possess the human and natural resources, as well as the know-how and capability to successfully overcome many of the challenges we now face. Our Hemispheric institutions are endowed with a wealth of financial and technical resources. Our Member states, while sometimes stymied by resource constraints, have the political will to undertake initiatives that will bring tangible benefits to their citizens, and Civil Society Organisations, such as the ones represented by you here today, with their knowledge and expertise, serve to enrich the development process.

Within the framework of the OAS, civil society representatives have actively engaged in dialogue and contributed to the decision making process on a number of issues ranging from the promotion of democracy to indigenous rights. Representatives of Indigenous Groups across the Hemisphere have met regularly to advance work on the draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In addition, the development of the Inter-American Democratic Charter incorporated the views offered by a number of non-governmental organizations and individuals. Most recently, the Special Meeting of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities held on March 13, 2008, included active participation by Civil Society Organisations from across the Hemisphere on the theme, 'Youth and Democratic Values'.

Distinguished representatives of Civil Society Organisations, you are engaged in a range of activities – from advocacy to service delivery. You campaign for change and continue to fight to remove injustice. You play a central role in keeping people informed, and you provide mechanisms to solicit the opinions of the public and to promote broad participation. Your greatest strengths are your ability to engage, to empower and to build networks to extend your reach. Civil Society Organisations are not a homogenous group of actors – you range from small community groups, to large organizations, but across the Americas, your purpose is clear – you are seeking to change people's lives in a real and positive way. In the final analysis, you are their voice and you more than anyone understand their reality.

As I have said before, the objective of this Forum is provide an opportunity for you to generate feedback on the theme of the Fifth Summit, and to make recommendations that will ensure that the Summit has a greater and more meaningful impact. The experience of the past Summits has highlighted the importance of facilitating the active participation of civil society organizations in the Summits Process, instituting measures to enhance the quality of their participation, and strengthen the processes of monitoring and implementing Summit mandates. Trinidad and Tobago is committed to encouraging, promoting and facilitating civil society participation in the preparatory activities for the Fifth Summit of the Americas and at the Summit itself. Other Member States must continue their efforts to expand opportunities for participation by civil society organisations at the national level, while increasing the capacity of their Governments to absorb and act on the recommendations put forward by Civil Society Organisations.

Let me therefore take this opportunity once again to reinforce the position that the Fifth Summit intends to place people at the forefront of the development dialogue. We look forward to continued collaboration with all Member States as well as with regional institutions, civil society organizations, and other partners to develop effective, practical and compassionate solutions for the challenges facing the Hemisphere.

Distinguished representatives of Civil Society, the organisations which you represent here today, play a crucial role in undertaking the activities needed for successful implementation of Summit mandates. As such, it is only fitting that you help define the development path that best serves all the peoples of the Americas. Our shared objective is to improve the lives of the citizens of our Hemisphere. It is my intent that your ideas and your vision will contribute significantly to the crafting of a Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, and I assure you that the National Secretariat will continue to work closely with you to facilitate such a process.

DAVID MORRIS
DIRECTOR OF THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS SECRETARIAT OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

I am honored to welcome you all this morning to the Civil Society Hemispheric Forum. It is with particular pleasure that I greet the many familiar faces among you, and I'm all gratified to see many new faces, which is evidence of the continued relevance and importance of the Summits of the Americas Process. Your participation in this Forum attests to the excitement and anticipation that is growing as we prepare for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, as well as the essential role that civil society plays in giving impetus and dynamism to the Summits. *Feliz día de trabajo a todas y todos.*

At this point I would like to provide a brief introduction regarding the program we have planned for the coming two days and the methodology we will follow.

The Civil Society Hemispheric Forum, one in a series of events and activities leading up to the Fifth Summit of the Americas, was organized jointly by the OAS Summits Secretariat and the Secretariat for the Fifth Summit of the Americas of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. This Forum provides an opportunity for civil society organizations to present their ideas on how to effectively address the theme of the Fifth Summit: "Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability." The purpose of this Forum is to encourage increased discussions amongst civil society organizations actively supporting the implementation of Summits mandates and working in the priorities of the inter-American agenda.

The objective of this Forum is to provide this opportunity for civil society to gather, dialogue, debate, and discuss the theme of the Fifth Summit and make specific recommendations regarding the topics

for consideration by the Host Country as it prepares a draft Declaration which will then be negotiated among the OAS member countries in the framework of the Summit Implementation Review Group meetings.

After this introductory session, the remainder of today and tomorrow morning will be devoted to working in thematic roundtables in the interests of devoting time to more in-depth discussion on four areas that are included as part of Trinidad and Tobago's Summit theme. These topics are: human development and poverty reduction, including health, nutrition, education and violent crime; economic growth and competitiveness; energy security and sustainable development, including climate change and natural disasters; and democracy, good governance and the promotion of human rights.

The objective of the thematic roundtables is for participants to engage in discussion on the theme of the roundtables as it relates to the Fifth Summit Concept Paper and to formulate recommendations that can be incorporated into or addressed in mandates. The roundtable methodology is an exercise in consensus building, in which all participants are encouraged to contribute your points of view and reconcile your differences of opinion in order to draft recommendations reflecting the results of your discussions.

These recommendations and suggestions will serve as a valuable input toward the draft Declaration of Commitments of the Fifth Summit that the Host Country intends to present in June to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Americas as they gather at the OAS General Assembly in Medellín, Colombia.

Each roundtable will count upon the participation of a guest expert, a civil society moderator, and at least one civil society rapporteur. Guest experts are members of the academic sector and international institutions and have been selected based upon their recognized expertise in the fields in question. Each guest expert will make a brief presentation on the theme of the roundtable which is intended to motivate and frame the discussions.

A civil society representative will then moderate each session; encouraging discussion among the participants, ensuring equitable use of time, and maintaining focus on the topics in question. Thematic roundtable moderators were selected based upon their previous participation in such events, and experience and background in the subject areas in question.

I would like to now briefly introduce the participants who will serve as guest experts and moderators for each roundtable:

Human development and poverty reduction, including health, nutrition, education and violent crime

Guest Expert: Dr. Miguel Garcia, Director of Agribusiness Competitiveness and Head of the Inter-American Program for the Promotion of Trade Agribusiness and Food Safety at the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

Moderator: Mr. Rodney Grant, Chairman of the Barbados Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (BANGO) and CEO of the Pinelands Creative Workshop NGO in Barbados

Economic growth and competitiveness

Guest Expert: Mr. Fernando Flores, Research Assistant, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Moderator: Ms. Eliana Bigai, Member of the Board of Directors and Coordinator of Projects of the Asociación Venezolana de Mujeres

Energy security and sustainable development, including climate change and natural disasters

Guest Experts: Dr. Anthony Clayton, Professor, University of the West Indies Mona Campus in Jamaica and Dr. Anthony Bryan, Senior Associate, Americas Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, DC and a Professor (Emeritus) at the University of Miami
Moderator: Dr. Mahabir Prashad Gupta, Executive Director, Interciencia Association based in Panama

Democracy, good governance and the promotion of human rights

Guest Expert: Carl Cira, Director, Summit of the Americas Center (SOAC), Florida International University

Moderator: Ricardo Sol Arriaza, Director, Unit of Civil Society and Participation, Fundación para la Paz y la Democracia (FUNPADEM) of Costa Rica

Each thematic roundtable will also be responsible for electing one or two civil society representatives to act as the groups' rapporteurs to record the proceedings of the roundtable and take note of the recommendations proponent. Rapporteurs should be prepared to take note of the discussions and help formulate the final document of recommendations.

Additionally, each roundtable will include the presence of at least one representative from the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, who is charged with facilitating the discussion, including opening the meeting and introducing guest experts and moderators.

The conclusions and recommendations of this Forum will be compiled by the Summits Secretariat and distributed to the OAS member states, through the Permanent Missions and the National Summit Coordinators, to form part of the institutional memory of the Summit process and the ongoing reference document of the recommendations and suggestions put forth by civil society.

The Summits of the Americas Process provided a stimulus to the recognition of civil society participation within the structure of the OAS and in the framework of the Summits Process. Since the first Summit of the Americas, held here in Miami, the Heads of State and Government have recognized the importance of including individuals, the private sector, labor and political parties, academia, and CSOs in establishing an accountable, transparent framework for a deep and durable democracy.

As Trinidad and Tobago prepares to host the Fifth Summit, it is reassuring to note the dedication expressed by that country's Government with regard to civil society participation and your contributions.

As you can see, this Forum is no ordinary meeting; rather, it is an opportunity to promote positive and constructive advances in the policies that impact the quality of life of the citizens of our hemisphere. Your work today and tomorrow will contribute to the formulation of the hemispheric policies and will impact upon future mandates.