

Citizen Participation in the Summit of the Americas

Nine years of experience of the Network of Civil Society Organizations of the Americas

Coordinator



Supporting Organizations

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

International Development Bank (IDB)

Inter-American Council for Integral Development of the Organization of American States (ICID/OAS)

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

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Project Citizen Participation for the Summit of the Americas

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I. Presentation

This document was written in the context of **Project Citizen Participation in Summit of the Americas**, which is coordinated by Corporación PARTICIPA in Chile, together with FOCAL in Canada, the Regional Coordination for Economic and Social Studies (CRIES), University of the Andes in Colombia, FLACSO in Chile, and the Inter-American Democracy Network (RID). This project began nine years ago and currently involves civil society organizations (CSOs) from 21 countries in the Americas.

This project seeks to familiarize citizens and CSOs with the processes of the Summit of the Americas, the commitments that the governments make in the Summits, and how these are connected to development of the countries and the lives of their citizens. In addition, it hopes to influence the commitments that the governments take on as well as their eventual implementation.

This document contains a systematization of the work carried out during the project's nine years, within the context of civil-society participation in the Summit of the Americas Process. The activities, lessons learned and results obtained after these years of work have been presented in this document so as not to lose the experience and expertise gained during the project. It is also intended to nationalize the knowledge and lessons learned so that they may be taken into consideration by other civil society organizations, government representatives or interested international organisms in order to drive participation initiatives in a multilateral environment like Summit of the Americas.

The activities that have been carried out are presented in chronological form, emphasizing decisive factors in the creation and development of Project Citizen Participation in Summit of the Americas. To give the reader more context, the makeup of the Summits and why it is important for civil society to participate are described. Finally, the remaining challenges for processes of this type are presented.

We hope that this document is useful not only for those who are interested in learning more about and being part of the Summit process, but also for governments in the region that recognize the importance of maintaining a cooperative relationship between the government and civil society. In addition, we hope that it is of interest to non-governmental organizations and networks that are trying to make connections among themselves and influence governmental decisions and processes.

Chapter 1

WHY IS THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS PROCESS IMPORTANT FOR THE REGION?

1.1 What is Summit of the Americas?

The Summits of the Americas are institutionalized meetings at a high governmental level whose objective is to discuss and make decisions regarding issues and problems of an economic, social, military and political nature shared by the countries, establishing the main lines of action in those that support the dialogue sustained among governments and reflect on the achievements made up to that point in the Americas.

The Summits are organized according to a previously defined agenda that outlines the issues to be discussed. From this discussion, two documents are prepared: the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action, which constitute the commitments of the governments.

The Summits take place in the context of rethinking inter-American relations and adapting the discussions and procedures to the new political, economic and social conditions in the world and the region.

So far, the following Summits have taken place:

- **PANAMA CITY** (Panama, July 22, 1956)
- **PUNTA DEL ESTE** (Uruguay, April 12-14, 1967)
- **MIAMI** (United States, December 9-11, 1994)
- **SANTA CRUZ** (Bolivia, December 7-8, 1996)
- **SANTIAGO** (Chile, April 18-19, 1998)
- **QUEBEC** (Canada, April 20-22, 2001)
- **MONTERREY** (Mexico, January 15, 2004)
- **MAR DEL PLATA** (Argentina, November 4-5, 2005)

First Summit of the Americas – Miami, Florida, United States

At the Miami Summit, in December 1994, the heads of state and government recognized for the first time that the participation of civil society was essential to strengthening democracies. Leaders highlighted the importance of making individuals, political parties, academics, the private sector and civil society organizations participants in public affairs, and recognized that public participation is crucial to the success of any responsible and transparent democracy.

The governments outlined a normative framework for non-governmental actors that would emphasize resource management, transparency, and the responsibility of civil society actors to society. Measures to improve the participation of traditionally marginalized groups in activities and social initiatives were also taken.

Summit on Sustainable Development – Santa Cruz, Bolivia

In December 1996 the Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, marked an important step in the implementation of the Miami initiative in civil society. The heads of state and government supported the broad

participation of civil society in the decision-making process, including policies and programs, and their design, implementation and evaluation. The leaders decided to promote better forums for the expression of ideas and interchange of information about sustainable development among groups, organizations, businesses and individuals. They decided to keep in mind the recommendations of the 1996 Inter-American Seminar on Public Participation in Montevideo and instructed the Organization of American States (OAS) to make the formulation of the Inter-American Strategy for the Promotion of Public Participation in Decision-Making a priority. The Strategy was intended to promote the exchange of experiences and information between governments and civil society groups regarding the formulation, implementation and improvement of the programs and politics of sustainable development and in the high-level meetings called by the OAS. The recommendations also included the establishment of consultation processes in the regional field and the integration and strengthening of the National Boards of Sustainable Development.

Second Summit of the Americas – Santiago, Chile

During the Second Summit of the Americas, held in Santiago, Chile in 1998, the heads of state and government recognized that education is a decisive factor for the political, social, cultural and economic development of our people, and emphasized the need to catalyze the participation of civil society in educational development. In addition, the Second Summit reiterated the importance reinforcing the participation of civil society. The Santiago Plan of Action called on the governments of the member states and CSOs to promote the development of principles and recommendations for institutional frameworks that stimulate the formation of responsible and transparent democratic organizations, and promote dialogue and alliances with governments in which the OAS can serve as a forum for exchange of experiences and information.

Parallel to the Second Summit of the Americas, civil society organized two hemispheric meetings with the participation of representatives from CSOs, governments and multilateral agencies from 34 countries. From these meetings emerged proposals on the subjects of education, the strengthening of civil society, the role of women in the eradication of poverty and discrimination and, lastly, corruption. These meetings were not necessarily linked to the official process; however, various proposals were incorporated into the final Santiago Plan of Action.

Third Summit of the Americas – Quebec, Canada

In the third Summit of the Americas, which took place in Quebec in April 2001, the heads of state and government valued the contributions of civil society to the Quebec Plan of Action and called for all citizens of the Americas to contribute to the process of the Summits. In addition, they recognized the important role that civil society plays in the consolidation of democracy, and that its participation in governmental programs is one of the most important resources for the success of development politics. The heads of state and government instructed the OAS and other multilateral organizations and international lending institutions to develop strategies to increase civil society participation in the inter-American system. These measures have increased the institutional capacity of the governments of the member states to be receptive to and act on the contributions of civil society organizations.

Special Summit of the Americas – Monterrey, Mexico

The Special Summit of the Americas took place on January 12 and 13, 2004, in Monterrey, Mexico. The heads of state and government met in the spirit of unity and cooperation to discuss the concerns shared by individuals in the Americas and develop an agenda for the region. The idea of holding this Special Summit came from an initiative by Jean Chrétien, the ex-Prime minister of Canada, because since the Quebec Summit in 2001, a third of the countries in the Americas had changed leaders, statistics showed 44% of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean was living in poverty, and economic development continued to be weak. For this reason, the heads of state and government met in Monterrey to advance on the implementation of measures to combat poverty, promote social equality and more equal distribution of economic growth, and strengthen the governance of our democracies.

In the Summit, the governments committed to proposing that the formal participation of civil society in the processes of Summit of the Americas be institutionalized, which is considered an important achievement for CSOs.

Fourth Summit of the Americas – Mar del Plata, Argentina

In the Fourth Summit of the Americas, held in Mar del Plata on November 4-5, 2005, the heads of state and government focused on the issue of how to create jobs in order to alleviate poverty and strengthen democratic governance and reaching a consensus on what major actions should be taken to achieve this objective.

The issue of participation of civil society was considered lower-priority; however, the governments committed themselves to encouraging more participation of citizens, the community and civil society, which helps to allow all of society to share the benefits of democracy.

1.2 The challenges and importance of working through multilateral processes: the Summit of the Americas Process

There is a consensus among the countries that it is necessary to leave unilateral politics behind and focus inter-American relations on the multilateral and the collective, more closely linking the social with the political and governments with civil society.

The original concept of Summit of the Americas was to establish a framework of shared values and commitment to achieving peace and prosperity in the hemisphere. No one nation can make policies without considering the effect they have at a regional and world level. Economic, political, social and environmental interests should increasingly be viewed from an international perspective.

With this context, the heads of state of 34 countries in the Americas met for the first time in the city of Miami in 1994 to discuss and approve a plan for political, social and economic initiatives. This meeting was the origin of a cooperative process which is still active today.

Leaders of the Americas have recognized that collective deliberation is a valid mechanism for facing the challenges of the hemisphere and that global problems cannot be resolved with unilateral politics.

While multilateralism is not the ideal method for conducting relations among the nations, it has arisen as a means for approaching transnational issues. Globalization brings benefits and challenges, making it imperative for governments to work together in order to agree upon an agenda for change and progress.

Of course, the Summit process cannot successfully solve all the problems that exist, nor can it create a political will in countries where one does not exist.

The Summits create a means to support national leaders who are already committed to the reform process. The Summits can make a difference only when the agreements made in them strengthen local processes that are already underway.

Ideally, the Summit process can:

- Create a political process in which the countries of the region agree upon shared values and a common agenda.
- Systematize agreed-upon rules and regulations and impel a collective activity which will later be fulfilled by governments and civil society organizations at a national level.
- Place new issues on the international agenda.
- Promote personal relationships among leaders from the region and strengthen work networks and alliances between countries.

The Summit process has successfully collaborated in the redesigning of the inter-American system and gathered a series of Ministries that have broadened the scope of the inter-American agenda.

Several years after the Summit process began, it became clear that the commitments that governments made at each of the Summits have a low level of implementation at the national level. This phenomenon has been called “Summit fatigue” and there are at least three reasons for it:

- Lack of political will to carry forward the necessary reforms that fulfill agreed-upon commitments.
- The Summit process does not provide the resources that are necessary to implement commitments. The principal method of dealing with this has been to coordinate with the main regional intergovernmental organizations, such as the OAS and BID, so that commitments established during the process of the Summits are incorporated into the strategies.
- The simultaneous multilateral processes of the Summit of Rio and MERCOSUR in the region, which took away strength, financing and focus from the process of the Summits, since they had to “compete” with other processes.

1.3 Why is there a role for civil society in the Summit process?

The international scene has undergone major changes in the last few decades.

Among these, one of the most notable is the participation of a greater number of actors in the multilateral environment, an environment which is no longer the exclusive area of the states. Forums have been opened for the more active participation of civil-society actors who wish to have a more specific and proactive role. This has allowed participation in discussion of public policy at a national and global level.

From the perspective of civil society organizations, there are two fundamental reasons to take an interest in multilateral processes:

1. The conviction that the problems of the region can only be confronted by a set of creative solutions, the result of respect for all American people and their effective participation in the processes of making and following up on decisions.
2. The representation crisis that exists in the Americas. In the democratic system representation is no longer enough. Various social and political sectors in the region demand more spaces for dialogue and the coordination of governmental and non-governmental actors, which allows the most direct participation possible in matters of public interest. The goal is to complement traditional forms of representation with citizen participation.

Governments and their institutions that seek to gain popular support and legitimization should be not only representative, but also participatory. The challenge of the governments is to shape mechanisms and instruments to promote citizen participation in public life, and the organizations of civil society are fundamental to making participation effective. These concepts are relatively new to Latin American democracy, and can be promoted by high-level initiatives such as those begun in the Summits.

The Summits of the Americas carried out in this decade have progressively recognized the necessity and importance of having the participation of civil-society organizations.

This new period in the multilateral processes has not been free from tension among the various actors that participate: governments, international organisms and civil-society organizations. Essentially, the atmosphere can be described as one of dissatisfaction on the part of civil-society organizations because of the quality of the open forums and the lack of any real influence on the decision-making process. For their part, the governments maintain that significant advances in degrees of transparency have been made, and it is impossible to make substantive changes any more quickly.

This participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations in activities related to Summit of the Americas has made the progressive involvement of these organizations in the international political process a reality. The Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted in the first Summit of the Americas have established the important contribution of individuals and associations in an effective democratic government and in the emphasis on cooperation, which leads to a higher participation of civil society in political, social and economic activities (Declaration of Principles, 1995, 10). The cooperation and participation of the private and labor sectors, political parties, academic institutions and other non-governmental actors in regional and national efforts to strengthen relations between the governments and society are also encouraged (Declaration of Principles, 1995, 11).

For civil society, the Summits constitute a useful mechanism for obtaining a “commitment” signed by the governments on issues that are of interest to the organizations and the citizens. At an international level, the Summits can constitute an exceptional space to strengthen relations in that:

- They promote a dialogue between CSOs and the governmental entities in charge of the Summits.
- The dialogue at a hemispheric level stimulates the governments to open or reinforce channels of communication with civil society.
- It increases the level of information concerning the Summit processes within governmental and non-governmental sectors.
- It increases the credibility and transparency of the Summit processes.
- With greater credibility, the process and the governments will have more support and legitimacy.
- Participation is made up of an input of ideas, suggestions and contributions that feed the process of definition of the agenda, the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action.

During the nine years of the implementation of “Project Citizen Participation for the Summit of the Americas,” various reasons established by the CSOs for participation in these processes have been gathered and systematized:

- Civil society organizations take an interest in the process of globalization and the associated issues of work, environment and commerce, among others.
- CSOs have acknowledged the importance of multilateral organizations like the World Commerce Organization and the importance of international agreements and how these affect politics in each country.

- By participating in these processes, civil society organizations they gain knowledge of other organizations with similar interests and establish work networks.
- The multilateral is an opportunity to confront diverse subjects from an international perspective.

Next is presented a brief systematization outlining the importance of the participation in the process of the Summits strategic and ethical-normative perspectives.

Reasons for Participation

PERSPECTIVES	
Ethical-Normative	Strategic
Participation is a value and an important aspect of the normative and ethical ideal of democracy.	This is an opportunity for the promotion of a dialogue and exchange of information between CSOs and governmental entities in charge of the Summits
Participation is associated with personal liberty and grants power against other existing powers in our society (such as political parties, organizations of professionals, agencies of communication and others).	This instance of inter-American dialogue can motivate governments to open or reinforce already-existing opportunities for civil society participation
Participation allows power to be shared and not concentrated in the few that have the means or resources.	The participation of CSOs allows an increase in the level of information on the Summit process in governmental and non-governmental sectors of countries in the hemisphere.
Participation reinforces the idea that citizens are individuals with rights and duties.	Participation of CSOs in the Summit process allows an increase in the possibilities for giving credibility and transparency to the process.
Participation allows coordination and organization among citizens.	Participation of CSOs allows the promotion and creation of social consensus.
Participation is linked to a society of citizens who express themselves freely and deliberately and influence one another.	With more credibility, the process and the governments will have more support and legitimacy and will be more likely to lead to social consensus.
Participation is a source of the development of human potential.	Participation is made up of an input of ideas, suggestions and contributions that feed the process of definition of the agenda and later the Plan of Action.
Participation adds values of cultural pluralism and tolerance to decision-making processes.	Contributing to the definition of the Plan of Action facilitates and motivates collaboration with the government in the task of implementing the commitments made in the context of government-civil society dialogue.

1.4 How and why did “Project Citizen Participation for the Summits of the Americas” arise?

The Fundación Futuro Latinoamericana de Ecuador (FFLA) organized a consultation process among civil society organizations interested in sustainable development within the context of the Summit on sustainable development that was held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia in December 1996.

This process involved more than 5,000 organizations from different countries in the Americas. Its objective was to discuss issues of sustainable development and

formulate proposals to the governments for their consideration in the creation of the Santa Cruz Plan of Action.

At this point the FFLA contacted PARTICIPA to organize this consultation process in Chile, involving PARTICIPA in the Summit of the Americas process.

After the Summit on Sustainable Development was over, the FFLA prepared an evaluative report in which the most important recommendation was that the consultation process should be repeated at future Summits and be improved and extended to other high-level meetings. It was recommended that civil society organizations try to consolidate this open forum, approaching the governments and international organization with a responsible and proactive attitude.

The FFLA proposed that PARTICIPA take the lead in continuing this consultation process for the Summit that would be held in Santiago in April 1998.

PARTICIPA accepted this challenge and prepared a work proposal to present to the Government of Chile regarding the participation of civil society organizations for the Santiago Summit. The conversations with Chile's government at the beginning of 1997 were the catalyst for **"Project Citizen Participation for the Summits of the Americas"** taking its first steps, and it still has not stopped.



Chapter 2

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR THE SANTIAGO SUMMIT

2.1 Taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the Santa Cruz Summit

Since 1994, various civil society organizations have been carrying out activities designed to generate processes of citizen participation in multilateral areas. At the Miami Summit (1994) as well as in Santa Cruz, Bolivia (1996), systems of citizen participation were implemented, led by academic institutions (the North-South Center, with headquarters in Miami) or civil society organizations like the Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano, headquartered in Quito.

For PARTICIPA it turned out to be crucial to the initiation and organization of this process to join the people who had been working on the process since Miami. In this sense, the process has been accumulative and is constantly being constructed.

2.2 Design of the consultation process for the Santiago Summit and establishing a relationship with the Government of Chile

In order to move forward as previously mentioned, in March of 1997 Corporación PARTICIPA proposed to the Government of Chile, through the Minister of Foreign affairs, the necessity of continuing and consolidating the process begun in Miami. PARTICIPA held discussions with then-Ambassador Juan Martabit, the General Coordinator of the Summit, and his team, to state its interest in organizing a consultation process with civil society organizations with the objective of contributing to the dialogue that the governments would hold for the Santiago Summit.

During the conversations that were held, the Government of Chile declared its interest in the initiative, but also made it clear that the Summit dialogue would be governmental, but that contributions from civil society would be considered in the agreements that were reached. It was thus established that the process of consultation of civil society would be coordinated with the official negotiation process and that its nature would be of contribution to this process.

Once the political context into which the process would be integrated was established, the Summit coordination team actively supported the process organized by PARTICIPA. After the conversations with the Government of Chile, PARTICIPA prepared a proposal for a meeting with representatives of civil society organizations in order to acquaint them with the Summit process and sustain a dialogue that would allow them to develop proposals for the governments that would be considered for the Santiago Summit.

The issues of Education and Sustainable Development were chosen for this meeting. Education had been determined by the Government of Chile as the main topic of the Second Summit of the Americas; therefore, proposals in this area were extremely relevant. The topic of sustainable development was chosen in order to create continuity with the Summit on sustainable development, held previous to the Santiago Summit.

With the topics defined, PARTICIPA began the task of seeking support and financing for the meeting. The Government of Chile actively collaborated in the process of sending letters to request support and funding for the initiative.

Support for the meetings was provided by IDB, the Government of Canada and the Government of Chile.

While preparing for the meeting, PARTICIPA created a database of organizations that had experience with the issues of education and sustainable development. It was not an easy task, as the selected topics were not necessarily directly related.

2.3 First consultation meeting for the Santiago Summit

In August 1997, the meeting **“Education, Democracy and Sustainable Development in the Context of Summit of the Americas”** was held. It was attended by fifty-five representatives of non-governmental and academic organizations, connected directly or indirectly to the issue of education from 22 countries on the continent as well as representatives from international organizations (ECLAC, UNESCO, UNDP and UNEP) and national coordinators from the Summit of the Governments of Chile and the United States.

Its principal objective was to discuss educational development from three perspectives: education for democracy, education for the integration of the hemisphere and education for responsible consumption. The methodology was based on the presentation of documents prepared by leaders in the issues, which would later be discussed and recommendations made. In the first panel, **“Problems and proposals for improving education in Latin America,”** representatives from the Center of Associates of the Program for Promotion of Educational Reform in Latin America (PREAL) presented the principal problems and challenges on the matter of education in their respective countries. The second panel, **“The role of the private sector in the development of education”**, included representatives from the Chilean private sector. One World Net meeting was held to relay the discussion on the topic of education to the world through cable television. This initiative was carried out in conjunction with the Embassy of the United States.

The principal result of this meeting was the creation of recommendations on the subject of education that would later be presented by representatives of PARTICIPA in the meeting of governmental delegates held in Santiago, Chile regarding the issue of education for the agenda of the Santiago Summit.

During this meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group, Ms. Laura Novoa, President of Corporación PARTICIPA, explained to those attending that the meeting’s purpose was for civil society to be able to make constructive contributions to the Santiago Summit. Another objective was that the agreements adopted have civil support, thus promoting social peace and maintaining democracy. She emphasized the importance of having focused the meeting on education to connect it with the Summit Agenda, and pointed out that the agreed-upon recommendations constituted the first step for making civil-society contribution a reality.

After the first meeting in August, an evaluation was done to establish the principal strengths and weaknesses as well as delineate what adjustments were necessary for the second meeting, which would take place in November 1997.

The main conclusions drawn were:

- It was considered vital to organize a dialogue about the issues in question between the government and civil society organizations.
- The necessity of preparing documents prior to the meeting about each topic that would be discussed in the meeting was established. The document should

contain a description of the situation in the region as well as proposals for how to confront deficient aspects. These documents would allow a dialogue more focused on formulating proposals to take place during the meeting.

2.4 Second consultation meeting for the Santiago Summit

The second consultation meeting for the Santiago Summit was designed and organized with suggestions that had been made for the process in mind. From November 4-7, 1997, the meeting **“The Role of Public Participation in Development and Overcoming Poverty”** was held. With this meeting, a forum was created for dialogue between members of civil society and representatives of the negotiative bodies of the Summit from the 34 countries and/or technical bodies from the governments with. Many of these members had participated in the seminar in August. The objective of this second meeting was to involve the participants (government and civil society) in a participative process of creating recommendations for the training bodies of the Santiago Summit on the subjects of strengthening civil society, the role of women in the eradication of poverty and discrimination and the strengthening of activities designed to fight corruption.

The issues on which proposals would be prepared were selected during a dialogue between civil society organizations and the Government of Chile. On the one hand, they had to be issues on which the organizations had experience; on the other, there had to be room for the proposals of civil society organizations on the issues, and they could not be politically sensitive issues.

1. Financing for the second meeting

This meeting was held with the support of Interamerican Development Bank, the OAS, the Government of Chile and the Government of Canada. The financing of the Interamerican Development Bank made possible the preparation, publication and distribution of the technical document *«International Commitments to Women: A Methodology for Holding Governments Accountable»*. In addition, it covered transportation, meals and accommodation for civil society organizations from countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Canadian Embassy covered the transportation and stay for government representatives from the region as well as non-governmental organizations. The International Aid Agency of Chile provided transportation, food and lodging costs for government representatives from Central America and the Caribbean.

2. Invitation Process

A general invitation was sent to civil society organizations from the 34 countries in the Americas as well as government representatives.

For the invitation of government representatives a close coordination was established with the Government of Chile through the Minister of Foreign affairs. Written invitations were sent, with Mr. Juan Martabit in charge of making the official invitation during the second meeting of the National Coordinators of Summit of the Americas on October 1-2, 1997, in Washington.

To establish this connection, representatives from PARTICIPA met with high-level government personalities, including then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. José Miguel Insulza, the Presidential Advisor for the Summit, Mr. Genara Arriagada and the then-Executive Director of the International Aid Agency of Chile, Mr. Francisco Vio, among others.

As its second task, PARTICIPA contacted each invitee by telephone and visited embassies in Chile. The Foreign Secretary sent information about the meeting to

Chile's embassies in their respective countries, asking for their cooperation in their dissemination.

The meeting was attended by 131 people, of which 70 were members of civil society, and 51 were representatives of 26 governments. Among these were Focus Groups for Inter-American Strategy on Public Participation from the OAS, Coordinators and Advisors from the negotiation forum, SIRG, and 10 representatives from international and regional organizations.

The methodology of the meeting was based on the presentation of three documents concerning the issues of strengthening civil society, the role of women in eliminating poverty, and the reinforcement of activities to fight corruption. Participants discussed these documents in groups and plenary sessions. The meeting was structured according to the methodology developed by the Inter-American Strategy on Public Participation (ISP), as a context for the government-civil society alliances. The idea was to make these alliances more common and allow development problems to be discussed and decisions made, contributing to the agreements reached in the Summits.

On the first day, the opening was attended by the National Coordinator of the Summit of the Americas in Chile, Mr. Juan Martabit, the IDB representative in Chile, Mr. Vladimir Radovic, ambassadors, government representatives, international organizations and representatives from civil society organizations. The proposals for each of the issues that government representatives and civil-society specialists were in charge of were presented on the second day. The first belong to the governments, responsible for the coordination of the aforementioned issue during the period of preparation for the next Summit of the Americas, and civil-society experts have a great deal of experience in the process and studies of the second. After each participation, experts commented and participants asked questions. On the third day, working groups of government representatives and members of civil society who worked with the three subjects of the program were organized. During the morning of the fourth day, the first plenary session took place, in which the first versions of the recommendations drafted by each group were introduced. Later, the participants made contributions and comments, which were taken into consideration for fine-tuning the recommendations during the next session of the working groups. Finally, in the afternoon, the final session took place, during which each of the three groups presented the recommendations they would make at the official negotiation table for the next Summit of the Americas.

In the context of the OAS, it is emphasized that in the course of the meeting the ISP was consulted, a commitment made by the heads of state and government during the Summit on Sustainable Development. In this context, 20 focus groups from each country attended, allowing for a more enriching dialogue on the subject of public participation in matters connected to development and the definition of the way the ISP operates.

2.5 Dissemination and effect of the proposals

After both meetings had taken place, a final document with the proposals was prepared to be presented to the governments. In addition to being electronically distributed to participants in the meetings, these proposals were presented by representatives of PARTICIPA in governmental meetings.

PARTICIPA made up the official delegation of Chile for the Region XI Meeting of the Summit Implementation Monitoring Group (SIRG), which took place in Washington, D.C. from December 9-11, 1997, where they delivered the recommendations.

The support of the Government of Chile turned out to be vital to achieving this participation.

In addition, between November 1997 and May 1998, the recommendations were disseminated on the Internet through the Informative Bulletins that PARTICIPA prepared. A publication with the recommendations was also created and widely disseminated.

2.6 Incorporation of the proposals of civil society into the Declaration and Plan of Action of the Santiago Summit

Once the Summit was over, a comparative analysis was performed to determine the degree to which the recommendations made by civil society were included in the Santiago Declaration and the Plan of Action. This analysis established that 23 of the recommendations made were included – that is, in the Santiago Declaration there are five paragraphs that include all or part of the recommendations. These paragraphs concern the following subjects: i) processes of hemispheric integration, ii) participation of civil society, iii) commerce, iv) the democratic system based on citizen participation, and v) equal rights and opportunities for men and women.

In the Plan of Action, 17 paragraphs that take the recommendations into consideration stand out. Issues included in these paragraphs are those of:

1. Processes of hemispheric integration
2. Participation of civil society
3. Forms of community and family participation in educational management
4. The strengthening of democracy involving a strong and active civil society
5. The development of policies that reinforce the issue of human rights with the participation of civil society,
6. Modification of all laws that are discriminatory
7. Education for democracy
8. Creation of mechanisms for the participation of civil society in the context of strengthening regional and local governments,
9. Ratification of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption
10. Establishment of the OAS as a coordinator organization for follow-up on the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption
11. It is established that the high-ranking officials should declare personal assets and liabilities.
12. Measures to fight against corruption in commercial transactions
13. The role of civil society in the issues of prevention, treatment and social reintegration of people with drug addictions is valued
14. Agreement on women's issues
15. The initiative for legal reforms to eliminate discrimination and violence against women
16. The establishment of institutions responsible for overseeing the agreements regarding women,
17. It is established in the follow-up that the governments will keep in mind both private organizations and civil society

2.7 Evaluation of the Consultation process for the Santiago Summit

The consultation and participation process for the Santiago Summit over with, it was necessary to evaluate the process – its methodological elements as much as the results obtained and alliances established. There were no resources available to carry

out an in-depth evaluation of the process; however, PARTICIPA sent a survey to the participants in both meetings in order to ascertain their opinions on achievements and difficulties of the process.

The first success established is that many representatives from the government and civil society organizations who came into contact for the first time in these meetings later continued their cooperation in their respective countries.

Other notable achievements included establishing a real dialogue between the government and civil society, gaining more information about the process of the hemispheric Summits, the concrete possibility of making recommendations and the establishing of a consensus regarding recommendations made.

PARTICIPA also emphasized the following achievements: having worked jointly with the official coordinators (from the government) on the issues; having formed a working team with people who have been involved in this process since the Miami Summit; the backing of the Government of Chile and coordination with the OAS and Inter-American Strategy on Public Participation.

The principal difficulty was the credibility of the process because of its collaborative structure. Some of the civil society organizations that participated in the process thought that it was “fixed” and for this reason there was no real participation. It was difficult for some representatives of civil society organizations to participate within the political context of collaboration with the governments.

Other obstacles that came up were the relationship between governments and civil society, lack of forums for communication, political polarization, and the fact that some of the government representatives that participated were not very closely connected to the process. Finally, the Organization of African Americans (OAA) reported that there was resistance to connecting to the African-American population.

Participants emphasized the difficulty of working in two languages, lack of time to study some issues in depth, and that the size of the groups made it difficult to reach a consensus.

2.8 Lessons learned from the Consultation process for the Santiago Summit

The following are some lessons learned from this process, which are also relevant for the preparation of the next Summit of the Americas:

- From the Miami Summit in 1994 to the Santiago Summit in 1998 a great deal of energy, work and thought were dedicated to the process of increasing civil society participation. It is relevant that between 1994 and the present much time has been spent thinking about how to organize these processes. Today there is a consensus on the “best possible method” in the sense of achieving a presence at the official negotiations table of the Summit with the support of government representatives and civil society. However, passing on information about this “method” to all the representatives that participate for the first time in the preparatory process continues to be a challenge. Finally, it is important that these people become familiar with the process that has been carried forward, in order to later improve and above all consolidate it.
- These consultation processes in preparation for the Summits or other hemispheric meetings should have representatives from governments and civil society as key actors, and should coordinate themselves with the official negotiation process. With the participation of government representatives and civil society organizations, the objective of consultation broadens to strengthen the dialogue between the two sectors about issues of development as well as others. It is an

element of strengthening the democratic system of the continent and achieving concrete support with the objective of creating government-civil society alliances. In addition, the consultation process loses strength, opportunity and continuity when it is not coordinated with the official negotiation process.

2.9 Follow-up Strategy for the implementation of the commitments from the Santiago Plan of Action

In the Santiago Summit the governments agreed to create an organization to coordinate the follow-up processes and the implementation of the commitments made in the Summits. Thus was formed the OAS Follow-up Office of the Summits, with the objective of supporting the process of the Summits and promoting the participation of social and political actors in it. Specifically, it was given responsibility for and official report on the process as well as negotiating with civil society organizations.

In addition, it strengthens the SIRG, a group made up of one representative from each of the 34 countries, which beginning with the Santiago Summit became the organization the governments should inform regarding advances made and challenges encountered. The SIRG began to meet two or three times a year to oversee the follow-up process and establish to what degree the commitments were being fulfilled.

In this context of greater institutionalization of the Summit process and considering that 23 of the recommendations that arose from the two meetings held in August and November of 1997 were incorporated into the Plan of Action, it was considered extremely important to continue the process of involving civil society organizations in the Summit process and follow up on the implementation of the commitments in the Santiago Plan of Action.

Considering that in the evaluation of the process the possibility of a government-civil society exchange was emphasized as an outstanding achievement, strengthening government-civil society alliances was regarded as essential, not only in the context of preparation but also in the implementation strategies of the agreements made in Santiago.

To follow up on the governmental commitments made in the Santiago Summit, the project **“Citizen Participation in the context of Summit of the Americas”** was created, with the purpose of carrying out follow-up tasks to progress in the implementation of agreements on the subjects of women, the strengthening of civil society and education for democracy, according to what was established in the Santiago Plan of Action. This initiative was developed thanks to the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development between May and December of 1998.

The project was coordinated by Corporación PARTICIPA of Chile and carried out in coordination with Asociación CONCIENCIA of Argentina, the Center of International Studies and the Department of Political Science at the University of the Andes in Colombia, UNIANDES, the Center of Studies and Promotion of Development (DESCO) of Peru, the Center of Information and Resources for Development (CIRD) of Paraguay, and Asociación Encuentro of Uruguay.

Each of these organizations carried out follow-up activities on the implementation of the agreements in the Plan of Action using a methodology proposed by PARTICIPA.

The work done by these organizations was focused primarily on influencing their respective governments so that they would implement the commitments made in the Summit. It was in this way that strategic alliances were established with Public Ministers and various meetings with representatives from the government, academics and CSOs were organized.

The achievements that stand out in this process are impelling legislative initiatives intended to strengthen civil society organizations¹ and creating governmental organisms responsible for fulfilling the commitments.

2.10 Lessons learned about the Follow-up Strategy on the implementation of the commitments made in the Santiago Plan of Action.

The work done and experience gained in the follow-up process for the commitments of the Santiago Plan of Action are useful in drawing conclusions on and making recommendations for follow-up on processes of this kind. The problems, requirements and methods of continuing, although they may have differences specific to the country and the subject at hand, also many maintain similarities between among countries.

Among the conclusions drawn, the following stand out:

- Civil society organizations and governmental agencies in general are not well aware of international agreements. In addition, the connected initiatives and activities following up on the implementation of agreements are few and recent. It is necessary, therefore, to periodically raise awareness among citizens and public services of the agreements of the Plan of Action as well as the advances that are being made on each issue.
- The governmental institutions contacted appreciated the initiative and effort on the part of CSOs to support the continuing implementation of the agreements.
- The success of this initiative is hindered by the fact that the government agenda takes priority in the issue chosen for follow-up.
- A systematic follow-up process on the fulfillment of commitments made in the Summit requires establishing the degree to which it is possible to meet with related governmental institutions as well as civil society organizations, taking into consideration two state actors: technical teams and political authorities.
- The planning of follow-up on the commitments requires a knowledge of the logistics of the operations of various connected public offices.

Based on these conclusions the following recommendations can be made for improving future follow-up processes on the fulfillment of commitments made in the Summits:

- Establish a plan of dissemination that presents to the public the agreements and advances that are being made in the issues that the government has defined as those which require immediate action, and which has been ratified in the Summits held previously.
- Develop a strategy for meeting with government organizations for the purpose of collaborating with the governments while remaining aware of the functions and objectives of citizen control of civil society organizations.
- Consider during the creation process follow-up plans, the priorities of the government in relation to the subject, and the agendas of connected authorities. Strategies for how to influence the budget allotment that each government makes for the issue in question should be included in the follow-up activities.
- Identify people and teams that work on the issue in public services and Ministries, identifying leaders in the issues, technical teams and public authorities. In

¹ In Chile, PARTICIPA, in coordination with the government and other CSOs, created the document «Basis for State Policy for the Third Sector and Private Non-Profit Organizations».

addition, the realm of people and organizations interested in the field of civil society should be identified.

- Be familiar with different cases of decisions regarding the issue in question and establish alliances and commitments at the highest possible level on the commitments that will be made on the subject.

Chapter 3

STRATEGY FOR THE QUEBEC SUMMIT: A CONSULTATION PROCESS IN 18 COUNTRIES

3.1 Design of the strategies and their scope

Once the preliminary results of the follow-up process for the implementation of the commitments from the Santiago Summit in six countries² in the region were available, the meeting “**Citizen Participation in the context of Summit of the Americas: from the Santiago Summit to the Quebec summit**” was held from December 9-11 in Santiago, Chile. Its purpose was to analyze and evaluate the follow-up process in order to gain knowledge for the preparation of a proposal for civil-society participation in the next Summit, to be held in Quebec.

With this objective in mind, a meeting was held with representatives from each of the organizations that had done the follow-up. Representatives from FOCAL of Canada, and the Esquel Group of the United States were also invited to become familiar with their work in the Summit process. Also important was the participation of representatives from the Aid Agencies of Canada and the United States, who came to support the process, and high-level representatives from the OAS, the Director of the Follow-up Office of the Summits and the then-Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to the OAS, responsible for coordinating the commitment to strengthening civil society.

After a discussion about what had been done up to that point in the context of Summit of the Americas, it was noted that the goal of the participatory proposal for the Quebec Summit was intended to promote the more active and constructive participation of CSOs in the Quebec Summit, with the additional objective of supporting the process of forming a civic democratic culture in the Americas.

The main objectives were to:

- Design a strategy of support for the governments in the tasks of informing and evaluating the implementation of the commitments from the Santiago Summit.
- Establish a known mechanism to facilitate citizen participation in the preparation of the Quebec Summit.

To achieve these objectives, three strategies were defined whose implementation will take place over 18 months:

Strategy 1: Progress on the implementation of the commitment from the Santiago Plan of Action to strengthening civil society.

Strategy 2: Dissemination of the Summit process through the creation of a web page.

Strategy 3: National Consultation Process for the Quebec Summit.

² This 6 countries are Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Paraguay and Uruguay

3.2 Implementation Strategy 1: Progress on the implementation of the commitment from the Santiago Plan of Action to strengthening civil society

During the meeting held in December 1998 in Santiago, the participating organizations indicated that it was vital to continue supporting the implementation of the commitment to strengthening civil society made during the Santiago Summit because: i) the commitment established in the Summit about the issue was considered related and had the potential to provoke an interesting dialogue, ii) it was determined that in these countries an appropriate context existed for establishing a government-social society dialogue, iii) it was particularly interesting to all the organizations, and iv) the OAS was initiating a strategy for greater transparency for civil society organizations.

In this way was defined the objective of establishing an alliance between civil society organizations and governments in each country, which would encourage the creation of programs and/or activities that strengthen civil society. This strategy was implemented between September 1998 and March 2000 in six countries: Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, since there was limited availability of financing for this part of the project.

After the implementation of this strategy in the aforementioned countries the **“Final Meeting: Strategy of Implementation of the Commitment for Strengthening Civil Society”** was organized for March 29 and 30, 2000, in the offices of Corporación PARTICIPA in Santiago. It was supported by the Canadian International Development Agency.

The objectives of this meeting were to a) analyze and evaluate achievements made and lessons learned, as well as difficulties encountered during the implementation of the follow-up strategy in each of the participating countries, and b) prepare and organize the civic consultation process that was carried out in March 2000 in the context of making recommendations from civil society organizations regarding the process of the Summits.

One representative from each of the organizations in the countries in which the strategy was carried out – Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay – attended the meeting. In addition, a representative from an organization in Mexico interested in the issue attended.

The Canadian International Development Agency, the OAS Follow-up Office of the Summits, the Follow-up Office of the Summits of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile and FLACSO/Argentina also participated.

From the analysis and evaluation of the follow-up process done in the six countries, participants concluded that the main achievements of the project were the following:

- The alliances and dialogues created among CSOs and between CSOs and the government, which have allowed for better relationships.
- Initiatives and projects for strengthening civil society have been compiled, organized and distributed.
- A commitment on the part of CSOs and governments to giving continuity to the process of strengthening civil society within the context of the Quebec Summit has been established.
- The project has contributed to strengthening national processes of articulation of and work on CSOs networks.
- Progress has been made in the significance of the issue of Summit of the Americas for civil society organizations and governments.

The main challenges were:

- The existence of election conditions in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.
- Division among the civil society organizations.
- The lack of dialogue between CSOs and the government.
- Lack of knowledge of the subject and process of the Summits on the part of CSOs and governments.
- A closed process and hierarchy in the public policy-making process in some countries.
- The lack of institutional commitment on the part of the government in some countries to formalizing its relationship with civil society organizations.

Some of the lessons learned were:

- The government-CSO dialogue is a slow and progressive process that is meant to establish a good relationship between the two sectors.
- Follow-up on the commitments made in the Summits motivates the work of the CSOs.
- The Summits are a tool for making government-CSO dialogue feasible.
- The Summits give civil society organizations a framework for more focused work.
- The governmental sectors most willing to work with CSOs at a national level are those connected to the issues of women, youth, health and education.

The second goal of this meeting was to design the consultation process in the countries, for which three key actors were asked to report the current state of the Summit process in order to design the process at a national level, connected to international context. One invitee was Mr. Fernando Schmidt, Ministry Councillor and Director of North and Central America and the Caribbean and Hemispheric Matters of the Chilean Foreign Affairs Office, who emphasized that the government of President Lagos would consider working with civil society, and has made this commitment into State policy.

The second invitee was María Fernanda Trigo of the Follow-up Office of the Summits, who presented information about the mechanisms and actors of the Summit process, and about the next General Meeting of the OAS, to take place in Windsor, Canada. She urged the attendees to file documentation so that their organizations would be accredited by the OAS and could participate in the meetings of political forces of the OAS, including the Permanent Council and its Committees and Working Groups, the Permanent Executive Committee for Integral Development and Conferences. The registered organizations can distribute documents from their area of expertise, make presentations previously approved by the President of the Commission and make statements in working groups or groups of experts. Ms. Trigo declared her office's interest in receiving contributions from CSOs and passing them on to issue coordinators.

Finally, Claude Beausejour of the Canadian International Development Agency presented the work that his office does in the Americas. The Agency functions as a Ministry and for the next Summit has a role in the negotiation of its agenda. It should therefore report on the various issues that in its opinion reflect the concerns and interests of the countries in which they work.

The antecedents and ideas contributed by these participants created a favorable context for PARTICIPA to present a proposal for how to carry out the dissemination strategy of the project and how to organize the national conferences for the Quebec Summit in each country.

These proposals were discussed by the participants, who contributed the following ideas for the design of the conference processes:

- The matters for consultation will be defined, in each country, together with its respective Foreign Affairs Office.
- The National Coordinator organization in charge of the process will negotiate its subject matter, starting with issues of interest to the Foreign Minister's Office, emphasizing the issue of civil society as a cross-cutting issue.
- In countries where the government-civil society alliance is problematic, the incorporation of a third international actor (e.g. CIDA, USAID, UNDP) that can facilitate the process is suggested.
- Once the issues are defined, the National Coordinators will choose an Issue Coordination Organization for each issue. The Issue Coordinators will be constantly informed about the consultation process that is carried out in the various countries concerning their specific issue and will be in charge of creating a final report about these processes. The National Coordinators, with the technical and methodological support of PARTICIPA, will be in charge of designing and implementing the mechanisms and instruments of consultation.
- The consultation processes in each country will involve the greatest possible number of CSOs that are interested or have experience on the issues. Taking advantage of meetings and regional networks to become involved in the process is suggested. PARTICIPA, in alliance with the Esquel Group and FOCAL, will also take charge of facilitating the National Coordinators' interaction with the Coordinators of Issue Networks and the country Issue Coordinators.
- Once the consultation process is completed, the Issue Coordinators will choose the proposals for each issue, systematize them and create a subject report for the final meeting.
- The final meeting will be organized by PARTICIPA and attended by the National Coordinators, the Issue Coordinators and representatives from the corresponding Offices of Foreign Affairs, the OAS, CIDA and GIC. In this meeting the recommendations of civil society for the Quebec Summit will be created from the Subject Reports. PARTICIPA will create a Final Report on the process.

Finally, during this meeting a proposal was validated that the process be coordinated by three institutions that have experience in the Summit process and belong to the three countries that were at that time in charge of the coordination of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG): PARTICIPA of Chile, the Esquel Group of the United States and FOCAL of Canada.

This meeting was a milestone in the design process of the participation strategy of the CSOs for the Quebec Summit. It gathered CSOs and representatives from the government and the Follow-up Office of the Summits with the objective of evaluating the follow-up process for the commitments of the Santiago Summit and cooperatively designing the national consultation process to be carried out for the Quebec Summit.

3.3 Implementation Strategy 2: Dissemination

One of the most common observations in the follow-up project implemented in 1998 was that there was a lack of knowledge of the nature of Summit of the Americas and the contents of its Plans of Action, as much in the government as in civil society organizations. Many countries lacked fluid coordination mechanisms between the government officials assigned to the Summits and those that are responsible for the implementation of the commitments. In addition, the CSOs did not foresee that the commitments made in the Summits can serve as a useful tool to promote the trans-

parency of the governments and their activities. As then-Ambassador of Canada to the OAS Peter Boehm postulated in the meeting of the Working Group of Civil Society, one of the greatest challenges for the organizers is “getting the attention of our public. This (the Summit process) is not in the news.” In conclusion, there is a real necessity to provide accessible and timely information about the Summit process.

In 1999, there were very few requests for information about the possibilities for citizen participation in the process of the Summits. The OAS had a web page for Summit of the Americas that published some documents and official information from the Summit and the North-South Center of the University of Miami, information related to the Miami Summit and the follow-up done on the commitments, but there was no forum for the CSOs to share information about initiatives related to the Summits.

For these reasons, the strategy for dissemination of information was designed to create, from what existed, sources of information and fill known gaps. Thus was created the web page www.sociedadcivil.net under the sponsorship of the U.S. Agency for International Development. The goal of this website was to be a means of communication for civil society, which, complemented by other websites like that of the OAS, would allow a wider audience to gain a global view of the Summit of the Americas Process, where citizens could access general information about the Summit as well as the various initiatives generated by civil society.

The website sought to increase the interest of civil society and the governments in the Summit process as well as promote and facilitate a forum for dialogue between CSOs and governments, with the objective of sharing information, experience and successful practices in the development process carried out in the countries in the context of the Summit process.

The site was organized into three sections:

- Search engine of civil society organizations with a database of approximately 3,345 organizations all over America. The CSOs not included in the database could register automatically on the web page.
- A message board that contained general information about the Summit process. It was also open to all registered CSOs so that they could directly post news of interest, opinion articles, documents of reflection and calendars of activities related to civil society in the region.
- Public forum for dialogue and the generation of opinions and proposals regarding the issues included in the agenda of the next Summit.

This website also allowed the National Coordinators of the Consultation processes and other organizations to introduce news and comments about the Summit process or initiatives that are being carried out in the field.

The website made public all the activities of the Summit process that worked for the participation of civil society organization from the Santiago Summit to the one held at the end of 2005 in Mar del Plata, Argentina.

3.4 Implementation Strategy 3: Citizen Participation Process for the Quebec Summit

The work proposal for this strategy, agreed upon in the December 1998 meeting, was intended to create the widest-reaching meetings possible that would allow citizens, government representatives and from civil society organizations to define recommendations for the governments concerning the issues included in the agenda of the Quebec Summit. In each of these countries, one-day meetings with a partici-

patory structure were to be held. The participation of 60 people per country was hoped for.

At this time there was a strong conviction that the success of this initiative depended upon achieving a consultation process in each country in coordination with the official negotiation process for the Quebec Summit, with the result that the agreed-upon recommendations in the meetings could be included in the official process. The time period for holding these national meetings was thus determined by the meeting calendar of the SIRG.

The proposal also took into consideration that once the local meetings had ended, a hemispheric meeting would be organized with representatives of all the countries in the Americas that had participated in this initiative. Government representatives and CSOs from each of the countries would attend this meeting. PARTICIPA would be responsible for general coordination, collecting national reports and issuing a final report on the process and recommendations made, disseminating this to the governments for the Quebec Summit.

This project was to be a joint effort that would take place in coordination with the governments of each country involved, the OAS Follow-up Office of the Summits, the coordinating countries in the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) on the issue of strengthening civil society, PARTICIPA of Chile, and local organizations in each of the participating countries. For the identification of these organizations, existing networks were used, such as the Inter-American Democracy Network and participants in the consultation process that took place in preparation for the Santiago Summit, among others. PARTICIPA would act as the coordinator of the general effort.

This proposal was supported by the OAS and the governments of Chile, the United States and Canada. With the strategy defined and the necessary political backing, negotiations were begun to get financing for the three components of the action, which would be crucial for determining in which countries the project would finally be implemented.

The implementation of this strategy was organized in three stages:

- Preparation of national consultation processes
- Execution of national consultation processes
- Dissemination of the results and incorporation of the recommendations and proposals into the official negotiation process for the Quebec Summit

3.5 Stage 1: Preparation of the National Consultation Processes

During this stage PARTICIPA, as general coordinator of the project in cooperation with the ESQUEL of the United States and FOCAL of Canada, was in charge of:

1. Seeking financing in order to carry out the consultation process

This initiative was developed over a period of 14 months thanks to the support of the Canadian International Development Agency, the Inter-American Development Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Ford Foundation.

Next will be presented a diagram that reports the financing sources for each country.

Financing Source	Country
Inter-American Development Bank	1. Barbados 2. Brazil 3. Ecuador 4. El Salvador 5. Grenada 6. Guatemala 7. Jamaica 8. Honduras 9. The Dominican Republic 10. Trinidad and Tobago
The FORD Foundation – Southern Cone	11. Argentina 12. Colombia 13. Chile 14. Peru
The FORD Foundation – Mexico	15. Mexico
U.S. Agency for International Development	16. Panama
Canadian International Development Agency	17. Uruguay 18. Paraguay

2. Identification of possible National Coordinators responsible for the consultation process at a national level

PARTICIPA contacted with the Inter-American Democracy Network in order to assemble its member organizations so that they could take on the role of National Coordinators and implement the consultation process in their countries. This invitation was finalized on January 31, 2000 in Guatemala City, through the training conference **“Citizen Participation: from the Santiago Summit to the Quebec Summit”** organized by PARTICIPA. This conference was held in the framework of the First Meeting of the Inter-American Democracy Network .

The conference was attended by 30 organizations from the

Inter-American Democracy Network, from 17 countries in the Americas. Its objective was to provide information on the Summit process and its importance as well as to prepare participants to organize the consultation process in their own countries. Each of the participating organizations received a folder with materials on the process and a methodological guide for organizing the consultation process.

As a result of this training, many of the organizations indicated their interest in coordinating the consultation process in their own country. PARTICIPA later contacted them, in order to confirm its commitment.

In addition, in June 2000, PARTICIPA made contact with the CRIES network (Regional Coordination for Economic and Social Studies in the Caribbean) with the objective of identifying CSOs that were interested in organizing the consultation process in English-speaking countries in the Caribbean. It was decided that CRIES would coordinate the consultations that four member organizations would hold.

3. Methodology design and training of National Coordinators

PARTICIPA created a manual to provide methodological orientation on how to organize the process of consulting civil society organizations. The manual is made up of two sections. The first is informative and deals with the Summit process: what it is, how it is organized, why it is important that CSOs participate and principles of participation. The second section presents methodological information on organization of the conference, including preparation, execution and follow-up.

This manual was sent electronically to each of the National Coordinators, so that it could serve as a reference and support for the organizations in the national conferences that each one would carry out.

4. Conference on relevant networks

Parallel to the consultation process of the National Coordinators, the General Coordinator of the project contacted the networks whose experience and work were related to the topics of the Quebec Summit.

The networks that were interested in participating in the consultation process were: International Transparency, the Center for Justice and International Development, the Women's Leadership Council of the Americas of Inter-American Dialogue, Afroamerica XXI, World Resource Institute (WRI) and the Program for the Promotion of Educational Reform of Latin America (PREAL).

3.6 Stage 2: Execution of the National Consultation Processes

The consultation processes in the countries and within the networks were developed between August and November of 2000. In general, the strategy and methodology proposed by PARTICIPA to carry out the national conferences were adapted to the opportunities and/or restrictions that the political, social and economic conditions of each place offered or imposed. Essentially, the process consisted of counterpart organizations organizing a consultation process in their respective countries for government representatives and civil society organizations with the goal of making recommendations on specific issues.

The issues to be discussed were identified in the draft of the agenda for the Quebec Summit that the Government of Canada created together with other member countries of the OAS. The specific issues on which national conferences were organized were defined by each National Coordinator, working with the Foreign Affairs Office of each country. PARTICIPA, as General Coordinator of the process, suggested that the proposals should focus on a limited number of issues in order to generate concrete proposals.

Next is presented a diagram that indicates the issues that were addressed in each country.

Country	Responsible Organization	Issues on which proposals were generated	No. of Participating Organizations
Caribbean			
1. Barbados	The Women for Development Unit (WAND)	· Women · Children	35
2. Grenada	Grenada Community Development Organization (GRENCODA)	· Education	16
3. Jamaica	Association of Development Agencies (ADA)	· Free Trade Agreement of the Americas	110
4. Dominican Republic	Participación Ciudadana	· Transparency · Civil Society · Minorities · Education · Small businesses · Women	160
5. Trinidad and Tobago	The Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for Advancement of Women	· Telecommunications	50
North America			
6. Mexico	Espiral	· Civil Society · Transparency	60
Central America			
7. Guatemala	Instituto de Investigación y Autoformación Política (INIAP)	· Transparency	35
8. Honduras	Fundación Democracia y Desarrollo de Honduras	· Civil Society · Transparency	35
9. El Salvador	Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo (FUNDAUNGO)	· Administration of Local Govts. · Migration	32
10. Panama	Libertad Ciudadana	· Water · Generate new jobs · Education and qualification · Extension of international legal obligations · Electoral reforms	10
South America			
11. Argentina	Asociación CONCIENCIA	· Civil Society	70
12. Brazil	Associação Gaúcha de Proteção ao Ambiente Natural (AGAPAN)	· Democracy · Quality of life · Integration into markets · Social Inclusion	20
13. Colombia	Centro de Estudios Internacionales Universidad de Los Andes	· Anti-corruption · Transparency	40
14. Chile	Corporación PARTICIPA	· Civil Society	53
15. Ecuador	Fundación Esquel	· Transparency · Education · Civil Society	75
16. Paraguay	Centro de Información y Recursos para el Desarrollo (CIRD)	· Gender Equality	30
17. Peru	Centro de Estudios y Promoción del Desarrollo (DESCO)	· Strengthening of Democracy · Civil Society	31
18. Uruguay	Asociación Encuentro	· Youth and Children	80
	TOTAL	33	942

Once the conference had been held, each of the National Coordinators sent his or her report with a systematization of the conference held, the number and type of participants and the proposals formulated according to previously defined topics.

Documents were also collected with proposals made by participants in the relevant networks that were involved in the process.

It should be emphasized that the national consultation process gathered more of 900 civil society organizations in 18 countries of the Americas with the objective of formulating proposals for the governments for the Quebec Plan of Action.

It was also important that this initiative was in constant contact with the official Summit process, principally with the Follow-Up Office of the Summits of the OAS and the Permanent Mission of Canada to the OAS.

3.7 Stage 3: Dissemination of results and incorporation of the official process

1. Systematization of the proposals

Once the national consultation processes had ended, PARTICIPA and Esquel systematized all the proposals received from the 18 countries. The goal of this systematization was to have a global proposal on each topic, as well as various other proposals on the same topic. The document of systematization of the proposals was sent to the National Coordinators for their comments and suggestions.

The “Work Document: Systematization of the proposals from 18 countries and relevant networks of civil society” was prepared in December 2000 for the **“Final Hemispheric Meeting on the Consultation Process of Civil Society Organizations in the Context of the Third Summit of the Americas.”**

The document combines the 243 proposals that were created in the conferences in 18 countries as well as those that came from relevant networks. These were organized according to the areas of the Quebec Plan of Action: 114 correspond to the issue “Strengthening of Democracy,” 80 to “Creating Prospering,” and 49 to “Development of Human Potential.”

The following is a list of the issues on which proposals were created:

- Area Strengthening Democracy: transparency, means of communication, the fight against corruption, strengthening of local government, human rights, justice and strengthening of civil society.
- Area Creating Prospering: commerce and investment, environment, telecommunications, migration, and job creation.
- Area Development of Human Potential: education, gender equality, and youth and children.

2. Final project meeting before the Summit

The document with the proposal was disseminated before the **“Final Hemispheric Meeting of the Consultation Process of Civil Society Organizations in the Context of the Third Summit of the Americas”** which took place from January 18-20, 2001 in Miami, Florida, U.S.A.

The meeting was organized by PARTICIPA in coordination with FOCAL and the Esquel Group and supported by the Canadian International Development Agency, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the North-South Center of the University of Miami.

The objective of the meeting was to develop a dialogue between government representatives and civil society organizations about issues of development in the

region in order to create more specific proposals for the preparatory groups of the Quebec Summit.

The specific objectives of the meeting were to:

- Promote a constructive dialogue among representatives of CSOs in charge of the consultation process, civil-society networks, cooperative agencies, international organisms and government representatives.
- Publicize and disseminate all of the proposals presented in the document “Systematization of Proposals from 18 Countries and Related Civil-Society Networks”.
- Discuss and study in depth the proposals that received the most attention in the consultation process.
- Create a document with the proposals created in the meeting, which will be conveyed to the official Summit process for the Quebec Plan of Action.
- Promote the consideration of these proposals in the official negotiation process of the Quebec Plan of Action.

The meeting allowed discussion and in-depth study of the proposals that received the most attention in the consultation process carried out in 2000. Through a participatory methodology, which included working groups and plenaries, the proposals in the systematizations document were revised and analyzed, specifically:

1. Strengthening Democracy: Transparency and Good Governmental Management, Human Rights and Strengthening of Civil Society.
2. Creating Prosperity: Area of Free Commerce of the Americas.
3. Realizing Human Potential: Education.

A total of 87 people participated: 41 representatives of civil society organizations, six representatives of regional networks, 27 representatives of governments, including from the Summit Implementation and Review Group (SIRG) as well as Ambassadors to the OAS and representatives of Aid Agencies and International Organisms.

The meeting was evaluated by the participants as very good, emphasizing the opportunity for direct intercourse between governments and civil society organizations.

After the meeting, the proposals presented to the governments were widely disseminated.

3. Civil society participation in the Quebec Summit

The Government of Canada, in its role as host of the Third Summit of the Americas, for the first time called for civil society organizations to formally participate in some of the meetings held between April 20-22, 2001 in Quebec, in the context of the Summit.

This invitation constituted a very important recognition of the work done by many organizations and networks interested in influencing the agenda and agreements made in Quebec.

During the development of the Third Summit there were three opportunities for dialogue and contact with the governments:

1. Friday, April 20: This meeting was chaired by the President of the Permanent Committee on Foreign Affairs and of International Commerce from the Parliament of Canada, the Ambassador of Canada to the OAS and the President of the Special Commission of the OAS for the Management of the Inter-American Summits. The various groups had the opportunity to present their conclusions and recommendations.

2. Saturday, April 21: Round table with representatives from civil society, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and heads of international and regional organizations. Three spokespeople from civil society presented the proposals to later be debated.
3. Sunday, April 22: Meeting for evaluation of the civil society program. Chaired by the President of the Permanent Committee on Foreign Affairs and of International Commerce from the Parliament of Canada, the Ambassador of Canada to the OAS and the President of the Special Commission of the OAS for the management of the Inter-American Summits.

It should also be noted that more than 50 percent of the recommendations made by the social networks and organizations related to the issues of society and governance were incorporated into the Quebec Plan of Action.

4. Coordination with the Official Process

As previously established, throughout the project PARTICIPA maintained a close relationship with the OAS Office for Follow-Up on the Summits, the Canadian Mission to the OAS, the division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Commerce in charge of the relationship with civil society organizations involved in Summit of the Americas (División Interamericana de Enlaces con la Sociedad Civil en Cumbres de las Américas del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Comercio Internacional de Canadá), and Chile's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

PARTICIPA kept these organizations informed on the conferences in various countries and invited them to participate in the organization of the final meeting for the project, which took place in January, 2001, in Miami.

A close coordination was thus achieved, allowing development of the non-governmental process in the necessary time period so that the proposals and their systematization would be present at the official negotiation process of the Quebec Summit.

3.8 Evaluation of the Consultation process for the Quebec Summit

The first evaluation performed by the organizers showed the following:

- The variety of issues for consultation and the recommendations resulting from the process indicate a civil society that is diverse, active, purposeful and inclined to support the governments. In addition, there has been an increase in confidence on the part of civil society organizations that originally were not inclined to participate in the process.
- The consultation process contributed to democratic governance and to a more comprehensive dialogue between the governments and civil society. In this sense, the fact that out of 18 countries, the Foreign Affairs Office of only two did not participate in the consultation process is an achievement. The Foreign Affairs Ministries of these countries have shown a great deal of interest in the process and have supported it not only through their attendance at the meetings, but also their participation in the meeting and logistical support in the preparation. On their part, the governments have shown that they are disposed to consider and incorporate the recommendations of the CSOs in the official position that they hold in the Quebec Summit.
- In all the countries, communication agencies (press, radio and television), have widely publicized the Summits and the role that citizens and civil society organizations play. This dissemination has led to legitimate support of the Summits since citizens better understand their objectives.

- The conferences and having more information about the Summit process motivates the work of civil society organizations in formulating recommendations as well as following up on the commitments made by governments in the Summits.
- The consultation process allowed better communication among civil society organizations within the countries and stimulated dialogue and communication with organizations in other countries that are implementing a similar process.
- The level of incorporation of the proposals into the Quebec Plan of Action was significant.

Afterwards, PARTICIPA and FLACSO of Chile, together with the Department of Political Science from the University of the Andes in Colombia and CRIES organized and implemented a participatory evaluation of the process carried out. They were specifically interested in:

1. Determining whether the national conferences are an effective mechanism for the participation of civil society in the Summit process and finding out what the CSO participants thought of the incorporation of their proposals into the Quebec Plan of Action.
2. Evaluating to what extent the capacity of civil society organizations to work in coordination with governments and international organizations within the context of multilateral processes was strengthened.
3. Analyzing the dissemination of the consultation process.
4. Collecting proposals about how to incorporate civil society into the implementation of the Quebec Plan of Action.

A total of 123 questionnaires completed by National Coordinators, other CSOs and government representatives were collected.

The following results from these surveys stand out:

1. Participation of civil society in the Summit process

- All of the sectors interviewed highly valued the participation of civil society in multilateral processes. However, it was suggested that for this participation to be more proactive, the governments need to share more and better information about the Summit process in order to improve the transparency of these processes.
- The national conferences are perceived by governments as well as CSOs as the most effective mechanism for civil-society participation. However, the majority of the CSOs posed a series of questions about the reception of the proposals created in these conferences and the transparency of these processes. It should be emphasized that the governments and National Coordinators believe that there was a high level of incorporation. The CSOs that participated in the conferences at a national level are not familiar with the Plan of Action and therefore do not know to what extent their proposals were incorporated.

2. Dissemination

- The majority of the civil society organizations interviewed described the publicization of national consultations as average or deficient, principally because of the difficulties of accessing information in their countries, and the lack of dissemination of information after the Miami meeting on the part of the National Coordinators.
- The most effective means of disseminating information about the consultations were the meetings held and direct communication among CSOs, National Coordinators, and PARTICIPA, FOCAL and Esquel.

- The web page did not play an important role in the establishment of interaction among civil society organizations or between CSOs and government representatives. Fifty percent of the CSOs interviewed accessed the website to inform themselves about the process. In Andean countries, Central America and the Caribbean, the main reason for not viewing the page was that they did not know that it existed.

3. Government-Civil Society Relationship

- The majority of the CSO representatives were critical of the ability of the governments to work effectively with civil society. There seems to be a consensus among CSOs that the relationship with the governments did not improve substantially after the consultation process, either in the influence that CSOs have on government actions or in the strengthening of dialogue in this sector. For their part, the governments declared that they have a good opinion of civil society organizations, emphasizing that the work capacity of both sectors seemed to have been strengthened by the meetings.
- Concerning the relationship with the Organization of American States, the opinion of CSOs is divided on this organization and its ability to work with civil society. The National Coordinators evaluate the relationship with the OAS more positively than civil society organizations do.

4. Final Document and the Quebec Summit

- The majority of the CSOs were poorly informed about the Quebec Plan of Action and nearly unanimously wanted more information. For this reason, the majority were not prepared to evaluate whether or not the proposals of the final document from the Miami meeting were incorporated.
- The National Coordinators and government representatives described the level of incorporation of the proposals from the final document of the Miami meeting into the Quebec Plan of Action as positive, which fits with the fact that they are better informed about what happened in the Summit of the Americas and the Plan of Action.

5. Principal Recommendations

- Improve the dissemination of information about the multilateral processes, particularly the Quebec Plan of Action.
- Organize a well-known, efficient, structured and permanent mechanism that guarantees transparency of the Summit processes and the willingness to establish a more effective dialogue with the governments.

Chapter 4

AFTER THE QUEBEC SUMMIT: HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS TO INCREASE THE LEVELS OF GOVERNANCE IN THE REGION?

4.1 Design of the follow-up strategy for the Quebec Summit

Once the consultation process for Quebec had ended and been evaluated, its continuity was deemed very good for a project of this kind. It was clear that the next step should be designing a mechanism or methodology that would allow verification in the most objective manner possible of the degree to which commitments from the Summits were being fulfilled.

The follow-up initiative was especially important because it would allow civic control of governmental fulfillment of initiatives to be carried out as well as acquainting citizens with the commitments made in Quebec and their degree of fulfillment.

To meet this challenge, PARTICIPA designed a follow-up strategy to later be presented and discussed with the organizations involved in the previous process.

In this context, the **“Evaluation of the Consultation Process for the Quebec Summit and Discussion of the CSO Strategy for Follow-Up to the Summit”** workshop was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from May 23-24, 2002. It was attended by 35 people from 21 civil society organizations that had been connected to the consultation process carried out for the Quebec Summit.

One objective of the workshop was to discuss the results of the consultation process implemented for the Quebec Summit and, after this conversation, present a draft of the strategy that was prepared by PARTICIPA in collaboration with CRIES, UNIANDES and FOCAL.

After an interesting discussion, it was agreed that a goal of the follow-up strategy would be to follow up on and promote the fulfillment of the Quebec Plan of Action in the context of strengthening democracy, through the improvement and increase of citizen participation. This was to be improved by a network of CSOs that design and apply hemispheric, regional and national mechanisms of outreach and advocacy.

Participants specifically agreed to follow up on, verify advances in and support the implementation of the commitments established in the following areas of strengthening democracy in five subjects: 1) access to information, 2) freedom of expression, 3) strengthening of local governments and decentralization, 4) participation of civil society in hemispheric and national processes, and 5) reform of and access to the justice system.

These issues were chosen with regard to the following criteria:

- These issues are the basis of the effective development of the rest of the matters that are mentioned in the Quebec Plan of Action.
- Progress on these issues creates effective conditions for the strengthening of civil society and encourages confrontation of the crisis of democracy and governance.
- On the whole, they allow verification of progress made on good government, which is key for strengthening democracy and civil society.
- Because of the experience and thematic expertise of the organizations involved in this strategy.
- Because these issues are not being taken on by other civil society networks.

It was agreed that once the necessary financing had been secured, PARTICIPA and the Regional Coordinators would prepare a methodology based on indicators that could be applied in the 21 countries.

Since this strategy would be carried out at a hemispheric, regional and national level, and given that multilateral processes involve these three levels, a coordination structure of three levels was defined:

1) Hemispheric Coordination

Corporación PARTICIPA role includes—the following responsibilities:

- Formulate proposals and/or make contact with financing sources to find financing for the execution of this strategy.
- Create follow-up instruments: indicators.
- Design and carry out the training and methodological transfer required.
- Coordinate and disseminate the project at a hemispheric and regional level through its institutional mediums: bulletins, web pages, publications, etc.
- General coordination and information about the process of hemispheric organizations (OAS, SIRG).
- Create hemispheric thematic reports.
- Guide, supervise and periodically check up on the process at its various levels and stages.

2) Regional Coordination

Regional Coordination was done by five organizations with expertise in the process. The Regional Coordination was organized in the following way:

REGION	ORGANIZATION	COUNTRIES
North America	FOCAL	Canada, the United States, Mexico
Central America	CRIES	Grenada, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago
The Caribbean	CRIES	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras
The Andean Community	UNIANDES	Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela
MERCOSUR	FLACSO-PARTICIPA	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay

The Regional Coordinators have the following tasks:

- Coordinate activities relevant to their region with national CSOs in charge of the process in their respective countries.
- Create regional reports on the process.
- General coordination and information on the process of regional government organizations (SICA, CARICOM, MERCOSUR, CAF).

3) National Coordination

The national level included 21 countries. In each of these countries, the execution of this strategy at a national level was to be the responsibility of a civil society organization, whose responsibilities would include:

- Support in the process of creating the instrument for follow-up on the implementation of commitments from the Quebec Plan of Action.
- Prepare for the utilization of the follow-up instruments.
- Apply said instrument in its country.
- Coordinate activities with the Regional Coordinator.
- Coordinate activities of specialized civil society organizations, other CSOs, and national networks in follow-up activities.

- Carry out advocacy activities with the governments.
- Take charge of dissemination at a national level.

The organizations that took on the role of National Coordinator in each of the 21 countries where the strategy was implemented were:

COUNTRY	ORGANIZATION
Canada	FOCAL
The United States	Partners of the Americas (POA)
Mexico	Alianza Cívica
Costa Rica	Fundación del Servicio Exterior para la Paz y la Democracia (FUNPADEM)
El Salvador	Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo (FUNDAUNGO) y PROBIDAD
Guatemala	Instituto de Investigación y Autoformación Política (INIAP) Asociación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales (ASIES)
Honduras	Fundación Democracia y Desarrollo de Honduras (FDDH) Centro de Investigación y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (CIPRODEH)
Grenada	Community Development Organization (GRECONA)
Jamaica	Association of Development Agencies (ADA)
The Dominican Republic	Participación Ciudadana
Trinidad and Tobago	The Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for Advancement of Women
Venezuela	Centro al Servicio de la Acción Popular (CESAP) e Instituto Venezolano de Estudios Sociales y Políticos (INVESP)
Bolivia	Centro de Estudios Estratégicos para la Integración Latinoamericana (CEEILA) Compañeros de las Américas
Colombia	Departamento de Ciencias Política de la Universidad de Los Andes
Ecuador	Corporación Latinoamericana para el Desarrollo (CLD)
Peru	Centro de Estudios y Promoción del Desarrollo (DESCO)
Argentina	Asociación Conciencia
Brazil	Voto Consciente
Chile	Corporación PARTICIPA
Paraguay	Instituto de Derecho y Economía Ambiental (IDEA)
Uruguay	Asociación Encuentro

Implementation of this follow-up strategy took place between May 2002 and January 2006 and was structured in the following stages:

Stage 1: Creation of instruments of follow-up, outreach and advocacy and search for financing

Stage 2: Training and methodological transfer to the National Coordinators

Stage 3: Implementation of the routes of follow-up, outreach and advocacy

4.2 Stage 1: Creation of instruments of follow-up, outreach and advocacy and search for financing

One of the main challenges for this project was designing and applying an instrument with indicators that would allow the measurement, with objective, reliable and comparable data, of the progress made in the implementation of the commit-

ments in the Summit. The instrument should collect official information as well as information from CSOs that specialize in the issues and from other civil organizations that can report on current practices.

This instrument was created between November 2002 and January 2003. The Regional Coordinators, with the support of an expert contracted for this purpose, were in charge of creating the instrument.

During this process the Regional Coordinators were in charge of the following issues:

ORGANIZATION	ISSUE
CRIS	Strengthening participation the CSOs in hemispheric and national processes
UNIANDES	Strengthening of Local Governments and Decentralization
FOCAL	Reform of Judicial Power and Access to Justice (*)
PARTICIPA and FLACSO Chile	Freedom of Expression and Opinion and the Right to Free Access to Information

The instrument was discussed and perfected during two methodological workshops. These were held in PARTICIPA from September 30 to October 1 and December 19-20, 2002. Representatives of the Regional Coordinators as well as CEJA participated.

Once the instrument was finalized, PARTICIPA worked during the months of May and June on the creation of a Methodological Guide for using the follow-up instrument. This guide contains contextual information and indicators that allow each of the National Coordinators to collect the information needed during the period of evaluation of the implementation. This guide was indispensable for carrying out the methodological transfer and ensuring the correct application of the follow-up instrument in the countries.

Parallel to the preparation of the Methodological Guide, PARTICIPA created a Outreach and advocacy Manual, the second document necessary for carrying out the strategy. This was designed to establish guidelines for the dissemination of the results obtained and influence government proposals in order to improve levels of implementation of the Quebec Plan of Action.

This manual was prepared during the months of June and July, 2003, and its objective was to present a strategic plan that would allow the National Coordinators to implement their own plan of outreach and advocacy, keeping in mind the results specific to each country.

Search for support and financing

Once the working proposal for the follow-up strategy had been agreed upon, PARTICIPA, together with FOCAL, presented the project to the Canadian International Development Agency. This agency financially supported to the project, publicly announcing its support and signing the cooperation agreement during the XXXIII General Assembly of the OAS, held from June 8-10 in Santiago, Chile. The agency contributed to the development of instruments of follow-up and dissemination, the implementation of the project in 13 countries, the creation of two workshop-seminars and activities of outreach and advocacy.

(*) In particular for the issues of reform of judicial power and access to justice, the consulting office of the Center of Studies of Justice of the Americas (CEJA) was very helpful.

The support of the International Development Bank was simultaneously solicited, and it cooperated in the implementation of the project in 10 countries, the creation of reports, and activities of outreach and advocacy. The U.S. Agency for International Development also participated through Partners of the Americas and the Inter-American Democracy Network, which collaborated on the implementation of the project in six countries, and co-financed two workshop-seminars and the project evaluation. Corporación Andina de Fomento supported the implementation of the project in four countries of the Andean Region, and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development of the OAS co-financed the implementation of the project in 10 countries and the creation of two international workshop-seminars.

4.3 Stage 2: Training and methodological transfer to the National Coordinators

Once the Methodological Guide and the Outreach and advocacy Manual had been created and translated to English and Spanish, the **“Workshop of Civil Society Organizations for the Implementation of the Quebec Plan of Action”** was held on July 23-25, 2003 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The workshop took place with the collaboration of Asociación CONSCIENCIA of Argentina.

The objective of the workshop was to train the representatives of the various CSOs in their role as National Coordinators in each country, on strategy for follow-up, advocacy and outreach and how to apply instruments designed for such purposes. The workshop was structured so that the various sections of the Methodological Guide, the indicators and questionnaires and the Outreach and advocacy Manual were reviewed in detail. Holding the workshop in this way allowed input to be gathered from all the National Coordinators, which suggested leaving out national particularities and unifying concepts and criteria for the selection of key informants in each country.

Thirty-one people participated in this workshop, including representatives from the 21 CSOs involved in the project, as well as representatives from CRIES, RID, and the High-Level Inter-American Network on Decentralization, Local Government and Citizen Participation. In addition, during the workshop the strategy of Minister Alberto Properi, Director of Regional Affairs of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Argentina, was presented.

4.4 Stage 3: Implementation of follow-up, outreach and advocacy phases

The third stage of the project was carried out in two phases of implementation of the follow-up strategy. The first stage was oriented towards evaluating the level of fulfillment of the commitments of the Quebec Plan of Action on five specific issues and in the area of strengthening democracy. The second stage was focused on carrying out activities of outreach and advocacy using the results and proposals generated in the first stage, with the objective of improving the levels of implementation in each of the countries.

4.4.1 First Phase of Follow-Up

The implementation of this phase of the strategy began in August 2003 and lasted until September 2004. It began with the collection of information, for which each National Coordinator had to adapt the designed methodology to the characteristics of its country and choose qualified informants. With these decisions made, the field work began.

During the process of collection of information, numerous academics and representatives of government and CSOs were contacted, which served as the primary input for responding to the indicators that measured the level of implementation of the commitments from the Quebec Summit. This process took six to eight months per country. At the end of the follow-up, each National Coordinator created a National Report in which the degree of fulfillment of the Quebec commitments in the country and the principal recommendations for what should be done to improve the situation were presented. After the creation of the National Reports, Regional Reports and Hemispheric Reports were created, which compared the situation in each country where the project was implemented.

Outreach and advocacy in the Special Summits of Monterrey

During the process of creating the National Reports, the governments agreed to hold a Special Summit of the Americas in January 2004 in Monterrey, Mexico. This Summit was organized because some of the presidents had recently been elected and had not participated in the Quebec Summit; therefore, it was necessary to meet and discuss the priorities of the region. This was an opportunity for the project, and considering the fact that the National Coordinators had collected a great deal of important information, it was considered prudent to hold the **“Internal Workshop on the results of the strategy for civil society follow-up to the implementation of the Quebec Plan of Action”** This workshop took place from November 21-22, 2003 in Mexico City, Mexico, the country where the Special Summit would take place. It was attended by 25 people – representatives of 18 of the 21 civil society organizations involved in the project, as well as the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Democracy Network

Its objective was to publicize follow-up process to Quebec and create proposals for the Special Summit of the Americas from the results obtained.

From the preliminary results obtained through the investigation done in the 21 countries, a series of proposals were created on the five issues for follow-up to be incorporated into the agenda of the Special Summit. The structure of the workshop was articulated in a manner that showed the state of progress of the project in each country and allotted enough time to reach consensus on the proposals that would be presented to the governments.

Two days later, these proposals were presented in the **Regional Forum “Civil Society in the Process of Hemispheric Integration in the context of the Special Summit of the Americas”** held from November 24-25, 2003, in Mexico City. This forum was conceived of by the Secretariat of Summit of the Americas of the OAS³ and PARTICIPA, which during September 2003 began to organize the participation process of CSOs previous to the Special Summit. At the suggestion of PARTICIPA, representatives of

³ As a result of the commitment to follow-up in the Second Summit of the Americas, which was defined by the OAS as an “institutionalized memory of the process” and to achieve “technical support of the SIRG,” the Secretary General created, in July 1998, the Summit Follow-Up Office of the OAS (OSFU) through Executive Order 98-3. In the Summit of the Americas of Quebec, the heads of state and government recognized the central role that the OAS plays in supporting the process of Summit of the Americas, and congratulated the OAS for its work as technical secretary and institutional memory of said process. To formalize this role, the General Secretary of the OAS signed Executive Order No. 02-03, increasing the responsibilities of the Summit Follow-Up Office of the OAS and changing its name to the Secretariat for the Summit Process. This Secretariat coordinates the implementation of the mandates of Summit of the Americas in the OAS, supports ministerial and sectorial meetings, as well as those of the SIRG to the Directive Committee and Executive board and the Committee on Management of Inter-American Summits and Participation of Civil Society in the Activities of the OAS and the preparations for the next Summit of the Americas. It also coordinated the participation of civil society in the Summit process and in the OAS.

CRIES, the Inter-American Democracy Network and the Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción (ALOP) were included in the process. The inclusion of these organizations was proposed because each had expertise in one of the issues for the Special Summit (Economic Growth with Equity, Social Development and Democratic Governance). FOCAL, Alianza Cívica of Mexico and Partners of the Americas also actively participated in this forum.

All the member organizations of the project also participated in the forum, presenting the proposals on access to information, freedom of expression and strengthening of civil society, issues that were on the agenda for the Special Summit. This participation was central to the development of the project, as it allowed all the organizations to learn more about and become more involved in the Summit process.

In addition, these proposals were presented in the meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) held in Washington, D.C. on December 8-9, 2003. Cynthia Smith of Partners of the Americas (POA) and Donald Mackay of FOCAL attended the meeting to represent the project.

The Special Summit of the Americas was held on January 13-14, 2004. The last preparatory activity was the regional forum **“Advances and Challenges Facing Civil Society in the Context of Summit of the Americas”** held in Monterrey, Mexico, on January 10, 2004. This forum was convened by the same organizations that hosted the Mexico City forum and was planned as a preparatory exercise for the meeting of dialogue with Plenipotentiary Ministers members of SIRG, also held in Monterrey, Mexico, on January 11, 2004. The proposals on democratic governance were presented by Silvia Alonso from Alianza Cívica of Mexico. The topic “Mechanisms of Participation of Civil Society” was addressed by Andrea Sanhueza from PARTICIPA. Furthermore, representatives of CRIES, FOCAL, POA, IADN and Participación Ciudadana were present in Monterrey.

It is important to mention that the presentation of the proposals in the SIRG of Washington and the Meeting with Plenipotentiary Ministers in Monterrey were important forums for CSOs in that it allowed them the possibility for influencing the Summit Declaration through their proposals. In addition, it can be considered an advance in the process of institutionalizing citizen participation in the Summit process.

In terms of evaluation, it can be established that one of the weakest aspects from the point of view of CSOs was the low attendance rate of members of SIRG at the government-civil society dialogue that took place in Monterrey before the Special Summit (only a third of government representatives attended). In the second place, the fact that CSOs had not had access to the preparatory documents of the Special Summit made participation difficult as they had no way of knowing exactly what specific issues would be included in the Declaration.

Advances for CSOs were made in the Declaration of Nuevo León, in which the institutionalization of instances of formal participation for civil society in the processes of Summit of the Americas stands out.

“We will encourage the participation of civil society in the process of Summit of the Americas, for which we propose institutionalizing the meetings with civil society and the academic and private sectors.”

Declaration of Nuevo León.

After the closing of the Special Summit, a synthesis document was prepared containing the proposals drafted at the Regional Forums of Mexico City and Monterrey for presentation at the SSA. Based on this document and on the Declaration—of Nuevo León, an analysis was carried out on the impact of civil society participation in

this Summit. This analysis focused mainly on the level of incorporation of the proposals drafted by civil society organizations. The main conclusion drawn from this analysis was that, as stated in the Declaration of Nuevo León, 45% of the commitments made by the governments refer to proposals presented by civil society organizations. This document was widely disseminated through the web page of the project, and forwarded to the project's database.

4.4.2 Redefinition of the Second Stage of Follow-Up

During the workshop, the forums and Special Summit held in Mexico City and Monterrey, the Coordinators of the project were able to meet and discuss what the next steps for the project should be. It was decided that specifying the objectives and paths of action for the second stage of follow-up was necessary.

This decision arose from analysis of the National Reports, which contained original, timely information. For these reasons, it was unnecessary to do another analysis of the level of implementation of the commitments from the Quebec Summit. It was clearly necessary to dedicate the second stage of execution of the project to dissemination of the results found and the impact of the proposals that were created by each country based on results obtained.

On May 3 and 4, 2004, a **Workshop for Intermediate Assessment** was held in Santiago, Chile, with the Regional Coordinators of the project to review the progress made by the project and to identify the achievements attained, challenges posed and lessons learned during this stage. It was decided that the activities of the second stage of the project needed to be adapted in order to make the work more strategic and focused on diffusion and advocacy at the national level. Another goal was to link it more closely to the preparatory process for the Summit of Mar del Plata, to be held in November 2005.

From this assessment, the Regional Coordinators agreed on the need to publicize the evaluation with the rest of the Coordinators as soon as possible and then focus on the tasks of the second stage of follow-up.

Within this framework, on August 10, 11 and 12, 2004, the **"Intermediate Workshop of the Civil Society Project on Follow-up to the Implementation of the Quebec Plan of Action"** was held in San José, Costa Rica. Its purpose was to reach an agreement on the second stage of the follow-up strategy to the Quebec Plan of Action, with the additional goal of disseminating the results obtained and incorporating its proposals and recommendations into the next Summit of the Americas to be held in Argentina in 2005.

For the design and preparation of materials for the workshop, the General Coordinator of the project worked on an agenda proposal which the Regional Coordinators later agreed upon. Once the agenda was approved, each of the Regional Coordinators undertook the preparation of a set of materials. In addition, the National Coordinators were asked to prepare for the workshop a report containing the outreach and advocacy activities developed up to July 2004 and to prioritize at least two of the proposals resulting from the follow-up. The goal of this selection of proposals was to make the follow-up activities more strategic.

Logistical support for the workshop was provided by FUNPADEM of Costa Rica. As the material for this meeting was translated, the documents were made available in Spanish and English.

The workshop was attended by 29 representatives of the 21 civil society organizations responsible for the national coordination of the project, plus one representative of the Inter-American Democracy Network (IADN).

At this stage in the organization of the workshop, Partners of the Americas (from the United States), the U.S. National Coordinator, asked for a workshop to be organized to present the proposal “Civil Society Participation in the Preparation of the Hemispheric Agenda.” This project was also intended to promote the participation of civil society organizations in Summit of the Americas, specifically in the next Summit, in Argentina. In this workshop, Partners invited the other National Coordinators to participate in the virtual deliberation forums that they would organize in order to use the proposals of the follow-up project to influence the conclusions of these deliberation forums. Corporación PARTICIPA, CRIES and FOCAL actively participated in some of these virtual forums as facilitators.

As a result of this workshop it was decided that during the second stage of the project, the main goals at both a national and regional level would be advocacy and outreach at the following activities, carried out with the results of the first follow-up exercise in mind:

- Technical meetings of the Organization of American States, multilateral institutions such as CARICOM, and civil society.
- Regional events with the participation of a National or Regional Coordinator
- Media dissemination with regional coverage.
- The civil society website, OAS website, website of each Web organization of the Inter-American Democracy Network (ADN) and other networks linked to the follow-up themes.
- Preparatory activities and the 2005 Summit of the Americas.

Work at the national level was to be focused on advocacy and outreach activities. From the results of the follow-up exercise carried out in each of the countries, and taking into account the recommendations arising from these conclusions, each National Coordinator selected two issues on which to carry out specific follow-up, advocacy and outreach activities to improve the level of fulfillment of the commitments of the Quebec Summit.

Next is presented a table that summarizes the issues on which proposals were to be made.

SUMMARY TABLE OF PROPOSALS PRIORITIZED BY ISSUE			
ISSUE	LEGAL ASPECTS	PRACTICAL ASPECTS	TOTAL
Access to information	7	8	15
Freedom of expression	1	3	4
Justice	1	6	7
Local Government		6	6
Strengthening of Civil Society	1	8	9
TOTAL	10	31	41

The issue prioritized highest for follow-up by the National Coordinators is access to information (15), followed by strengthening of civil society (9). Concerning these last proposals, more than half (5) concern activities to train civil society organizations and strengthen their participation in the Summit process. The issue prioritized lowest was freedom of expression (4).

4.4.3 Second Stage of Follow-Up

Once the Workshop had ended, the National Coordinators returned to their countries with the task of drawing up a working plan at the national level between August 2004 and July 2005.

During these months, and in accordance with the work plan of each country, the organizations developed several outreach and advocacy activities at the national level. Their purpose was to educate citizens on the Summit processes, the importance of the commitments undertaken by the governments and the results and proposals created from the follow-up exercise.

These activities consist mainly of press conferences and notices or interviews in the newspaper, on the radio, and on television to educate the public on the issues on which follow-up was done and related proposals. In addition, in 21 countries the National Coordinators met with other CSOs to present the results, ask for other opinions and look at possible strategies for improving the situation and making progress on the implementation of the commitments of the Quebec Plan of Action. As a result of these meetings, CSOs that work together formed alliances in some countries. One example is that of Honduras and Mexico, where the National Coordinators joined together to work on the issues of local government and access to information.

Outreach and Advocacy for the Fourth Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata

The final goal of the activities carried out during the second stage of the project was to influence the Fourth Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, of which the subject was *“Crear trabajo para enfrentar la pobreza y fortalecer la gobernabilidad democrática”* (Creating employment to alleviate poverty and strengthening democratic governance). It is important, however, to establish that the agenda for this Summit was dedicated mainly to the issue of work and generation of employment. The issues of democratic governance did not play a significant role in the agenda nor in the negotiation process of the commitments that the governments would take on.

Civil society participated actively in the process leading up to the Summit, bringing the proposals of the project to the following meetings:

- Round table with civil society and the Special Session of the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities (CISC): *“Creating employment to alleviate poverty and strengthening democratic governance,”* held in Washington, D.C., on January 24 and 25, 2005.
- XXXVII Meeting of the Summit Implementation and Review Group, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on March 9 and 10, 2005.
- The seminar *“Democracia y la IV Cumbre de las Américas”* (Democracy and the Fourth Summit of the Americas), held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on March 11, 2005.
- Hemispheric Forum of Civil Society: *“Hacer realidad los beneficios de la democracia”* (Making the benefits of democracy a reality), April 11-12, 2005, Washington, D.C.
- Dialogue among the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Heads of the Delegation of Member States and representatives of civil society held in the framework of the XXXV General Assembly of the OAS in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, U.S.A. on June 5, 2005.

In all of these meetings the publications of the project, principally the Hemispheric Report and some National Reports (from Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Co-

lombia, Chile, El Salvador, and Paraguay, among others), as well as documents summarizing the main results and proposals by issue were distributed.

Specifically for the Fourth Summit, the Government of Argentina created an internal office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Commerce, responsible for organizing and facilitating civil-society participation in the framework of the Summit and its preparatory activities. It was thus that the General Coordination of the Forum for the Participation of Civil Society of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat of Summit of the Americas of the OAS organized the **“Regional Forum with Civil Society: Creating employment to alleviate poverty and strengthening democratic governance”** held September 6-7, 2005 in the Palacio San Martín in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The objective of this regional forum was to promote the discussion and interchange of ideas among the CSOs that monitor the implementation of the OAS initiatives and the commitments of the Summits and work in areas of the Inter-American Agenda. The forum was well-attended; however, the methodology used by the Government of Argentina to guide the dialogue was criticized because although it allowed the participation of all attendees, there was no consensus on the recommendations that would later be given to government representatives.

A synthesis of the presentations made during the civil-society forum was presented to the National Coordinators of the Summits for their consideration during a session with civil society in the XL Meeting of SIRG, held September 8, 2005.

On November 3, 2005, the meeting **“Creating employment to alleviate poverty and strengthening democratic governance”** was held in the framework of the Fourth Summit of the Americas, the only activity between governments and civil society. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the General Secretary of the OAS and representatives of civil society participated in the meeting, during which approximately 20 civil-society representatives made proposals and commentary about a wide range of issues to be considered in the negotiation of the official documents of the Summit.

However, after this activity, the doors of the Summit were closed to civil society. For some representatives of the civil society sector, this represents a stagnation of the process of civil-society participation in the Summits, above all in comparison to what took place in the Summits of Quebec and Monterrey, where civil society was able to interact more with government representatives.

The lack of publicization of the official documents of the Summit in the stages of preparation and finalization was also criticized. Civil society did not have access to the final version of the Plan of Action or the Mar del Plata Declaration that the governmental delegates were negotiating, and for this reason the recommendations of civil society could not be as precise nor as timely as had been hoped.

4.5 Evaluation of the civil society Strategy for Follow-Up to the Quebec Plan of Action

After two and a half years of work in 21 countries in the region, the project “Civil Society Strategy for Follow-up to the Quebec Plan of Action” ended in December 2005. In the opinion of the Regional Coordinators of the project, it was extremely relevant to analyze central aspects of this experience of follow-up on implementation of commitments from the Quebec Summit in the area of strengthening democracy. In this context, negotiations were begun to find the support necessary to carry out the evaluation process, which was financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development through Partners of the Americas and the Inter-American Democracy Network and the International Development Bank.

Between September 2005 and January 2006 an evaluation of the project was done in order to identify its principal results, aspects for improvement and recommendations for future follow-up initiatives to governmental commitments.

For this purpose, PARTICIPA contracted a consulting expert who prepared a detailed proposal for how to perform the evaluation, identifying aspects to evaluate and actors to consult. Once this document was approved, instruments for collection of information were created. There were five of these in total, one for each type of actor (Regional Coordination, National Coordination, key informants, government representatives in SIRG, donors and the Secretariat of Summit of the Americas in the OAS).

The results of this evaluation indicate that all the types of actors consulted believe that the objectives of the project have been met. The first accomplishment of the project was the advocacy and outreach on the Summits that was done among CSOs. The project also effectively follows up on the Quebec Plan of Action in the context of strengthening democracy. This level of achievement was lower in terms of the impact of the project on governments and civil society at a hemispheric, regional and national level in relation with the Summit process.

The methodology utilized by the National Coordinators to do the evaluations and prepare the first National Reports is considered adequate.

Among the strengths of the methodology, the following stand out:

- It contributes to improving the accountability of the governments faced with commitments made in the Summits.
- It is a consensual instrument among countries participating in the project.
- It allows the establishment of the

current state of affairs for the five issues for follow-up are found and evaluate advances and regressions at a national level.

Among the weaknesses, the following stand out:

- The information gathered through the questionnaire did not allow specific reporting on the particularities of each country.
- It does not directly influence the implementation and fulfillment of the commitments.

The CSOs in charge of the project in their respective countries indicated that it supported them significantly in aspects such as: i) educating themselves about the Summit process and becoming aware of the importance of following up on the commitments, ii) obtaining information from the participatory forums at the Summits and the OAS, iii) opening channels of communication with other organizations and demonstrating the importance of creating work networks, iv) learning more about the political situation in Latin America, and v) incorporating new issues into the agenda and learning follow-up methodology.

The strategic objective of Influencing governments at a national and international level was also achieved, according to the results of the evaluation. Within the framework of the project, activities were carried out with CSOs and governments in order to promote: i) legal reform, ii) improvement of public policy, and iii) participation of CSOs in the Summit processes at a national, regional and hemispheric level.

The contributions made to the Summit process, according to the actors consulted, included the following:

- The possibility of hearing points of view on the issues being discussed in the Summits different from those of the governments and their officials.

- Presenting the issues of the Summits not only in official meetings of the governments, but also in other areas of society.
- Educating and informing citizens on the Summit processes.
- Following up in member countries of the OAS regarding commitments made during the Summit processes and finding out to what degree they have been implemented.
- A more active participation on the part of CSOs and their representatives in the aforementioned processes.

4.6 Lessons learned from the civil society Follow-Up Strategy to the Quebec Plan of Action

The experience gained from the results of the evaluation and the Special Summit of the Americas shows that more declarations and commitments from the governments are not needed; rather, those that have been made need to be implemented at a national level. They should appear in new policies, programs, laws and reforms as countries implement the commitments they have made.

In addition, there are several aspects that should be mentioned, as they may be useful for future projects. Firstly, that the construction of a methodology and indicators for evaluating the implementation of commitments is a long, complex process that is always being improved. The project took an important step in choosing five issues, defining them, operationalizing them, and translating them into questions and questionnaires. Some small difficulties were encountered in the application of the indicators, which indicates the necessity of improving them, keeping in mind that they should be comparable among countries.

Secondly, the project underestimated the amount of time necessary to properly apply the instrument; that is, the times initially estimated were not sufficient in practice. The lag time can be attributed to the delay in receiving resources.

Thirdly, it should be emphasized that working with a CSO network is a challenge which requires time, dedication and the joining of forces and opinions. Although it can seem at times like a superfluous use of resources, nevertheless, its relevance becomes apparent when the time come to evaluate its impact on the accomplishment of joint activities. The coordination of more than 20 organizations in a group initiative has given strength and legitimacy to the project. One example is the organization of the workshops, meetings and forums previously mentioned, activities which ultimately achieved the incorporation of civil society proposals into the Declaration of Nuevo León — nearly half (45%) of the commitments in the document refer to proposals created by CSOs.

Fourthly, after nine years of work with the Summit process, it is possible to see how the opportunities for participation have been increasing. The actions of some governments stand out, particularly those that have opened forums for CSOs to present their opinions and ideas. The project has collaborated significantly in the activities of these forums.

Finally, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, the inter-American system has opened significantly to participation by CSOs. However, this does not occur at a national level, where the Offices of Foreign Affairs of the countries keep a distance from the work of CSOs, making dialogue difficult. While this situation may not be true in all the countries — in some, the Offices of Foreign Affairs support CSOs so that they can participate in the Summit process — it is necessary to establish some degree of collaborations between governments and civil society organizations.

Chapter 5

FINAL REFLECTIONS: FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR THE PROJECT “CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS”

The process of Summit of the Americas, with close to 12 years of experience (1994 to 2006), has been traveling along a road it was building at the same time. From the perspective of civil society, this process has included historical moments such as the recognition of the importance of citizen participation to strengthening democracy in the Miami Summit in 1994; the wide-reaching process of citizen consultation and forums of interaction prior to the Quebec Summit in 2001; and the commitment of the governments to institutionalizing opportunities for formal participation of civil society in the processes of Summit of the Americas during the Special Summit of Monterrey in 2004.

A network of civil society organizations arose in 1997 which has been progressively growing stronger, and today exists in 21 countries of the Americas, with the goal of promoting the participation of civil society in the processes of the Summits. This process has been led by Corporación PARTICIPA of Chile, which originally worked in alliance with the ESQUEL Group of the United States and FOCAL of Canada. Later the Regional Coordination for Economic and Social Studies (CRIES) and the Political Science Department of University of the Andes (UNIANDÉS) of Colombia also became general coordinators.

During these nine years of experience, this network has implemented the project **“Citizen Participation for the Summit of the Americas,”** and carried out systematic and continuous work on participation, follow-up, dissemination and support of the implementation of the commitments from the Summits. Its work has been structured differently depending on the characteristics of different Summits, experience gained and the financial support available. However, its support of the Summit processes and the work done at a national level in the context of each Summit is undeniable.

The results of the Follow-up to the Quebec Summit indicate that the following are some of the principal achievements of this project:

- **21 countries from North America, the Caribbean, Central America, the Andean Community and the Southern Cone have a better knowledge of the Summit process.** A leadership role has been given to civil society organizations in 21 countries from North America, the Caribbean, Central America, the Andean Community and the Southern Cone. This has increased the knowledge of the Summit process in each country thanks to the follow-up done on the governmental commitments and the dissemination of the results found. Each of the 21 countries held at least two meetings of dissemination of the results found as well as sending the results to the press and electronically publicizing the project and its results.
- **The project began with a basic understanding of the situation of the countries (strengths and weaknesses) for each of the issues monitored:** access to information, freedom of expression, decentralization, local governments, access to justice and participation of civil society. In addition, the project presents a comparative look at the 21 countries in these respective issues, which is found in the First Hemispheric Report. These results have been presented in national

as well as international spheres: the Summits of Santiago, Quebec, Monterrey and Mar del Plata; the General Assemblies of the OAS, the meetings of SIRG and various Dialogues of Plenipotentiary Ministers.

- **Development of the government-civil society dialogue at the national, regional and hemispheric levels on the strengthening of democracy has been achieved.** Based on the results of the follow-up and the proposals formulated to improve implementation at a national level, the project has promoted various spaces for discussion through meetings and seminars within the countries, as well as active participation in the hemispheric meetings organized by the OAS and other institutions. The project has thus produced current data and a critical analysis that has substantially strengthened this dialogue.
- **The project has achieved a successful process of influence on the various preparatory forums for the General Assemblies of the OAS and the Summits** that have been developed in this period. The objective of the advocacy work was to encourage government officials to incorporate proposals that had been formulated during the project into official documents, based on the analysis of each of the issues. One example is the Declaration of Nuevo León, where 45% of the commitments made by the governments refer to proposals from CSOs.
- **This project, together with other initiatives, has played a role in the progress made in the institutionalization of the participation of civil society organizations in the OAS and the Summit Process.** Since the Assembly of the OAS held in March 2003, a forum for dialogue between civil society organizations and foreign ministers has been incorporated into the Official Agenda of the Meeting and the SIRG.
- **This process has strengthened the work done within civil society networks in the Americas,** has given power and credibility to CSOs and, more specifically, has allowed participating organizations to gain a wide range of experience with the issues at hand.

It is apparent that the project “Citizen Participation for the Summits of the Americas” has achieved important recognition at a national and international level. Its follow-up initiatives in member countries of the OAS regarding the commitments made in the Summit processes are regarded as strong. It utilizes a methodology common to all the countries in the hemisphere concerning the progress on and results of the issues of follow-up, and has achieved a position with NGOs and CSOs as a legitimate actor connected to work in the hemispheric network. All this constitutes a valuable resource that should be enriched and consolidated.

From this perspective, it is necessary and timely to continue to promote initiatives that follow up on work done in the recent years. There are human and institutional resources with experience, legitimacy and work methodologies that can continue to make contributions so that the processes of Summit of the Americas coordinate and strengthen democracies in the region. Next are presented recommendations and key ideas that any future project should consider in order to give continuity to achievements made up until now. These suggestions are organized according to the following central elements:

Objectives: The following stage of this project should focus on the work that has been done up to this point. At a national level, it should center its activities on the support and implementation of the commitments made in the Summits, with a coordinated and systematic process with governmental bodies at a national level, in order to improve the dissemination of the Summit processes and their impact on the

everyday life of the citizens. At an international level, it should continue to strengthen the work of the network of CSOs connected to the Summit process, as well as attempt to improve mechanisms of dialogue and joint work between governments and civil society, taking advantage of existing good relationships to achieve dialogues with higher levels of influence on governmental agendas.

Methodology: Supporting the implementation of the Summit commitments requires the continual improvement of the follow-up methodology utilized, in order to estimate the advances on this matter made in comparison to the analysis done in the first evaluation of 2003-2004. Innovations to this methodology should take into account indicators or mechanisms that show an understanding of the particularities and specifics of each country. The challenge will be combining two aspects to achieve a comparative regional view without losing view of the particularities of each country.

Follow-Up Issues: The level of implementation of the commitments is insufficient. It is still extremely relevant to continue working on the central issues of democratic governance. To maintain focus, the next set of issues chosen for development should be those where there is expertise within the network of CSO participants; that is, in access to information, freedom of expression, local governments and decentralization and strengthening of civil society. The issue of justice is excluded because it requires greater expertise than the CSOs have and existing networks already work with this issue.

Recipients: Later stages should continue guiding this work towards strengthening the network of CSOs connected to the initiative, expanding to new national CSOs and continuing to work with governments and media at a national level. The challenge, therefore, is to generate mechanisms of work and dissemination common to the countries but which also leave room for the particularities of each country.

Work Strategies: The evaluation done at the end of 2005 affirms the logic of the proposal to organize the work according to two main strategies: one oriented towards follow-up and evaluation of the governmental commitments, and a second focused on advocacy and outreach. For this reason later stages of the project should consider maintaining these two strategies, adding new specificities or innovations to the work to be carried out, consistent with the objectives and emphasis previously mentioned. The possibility of innovation in methods of working with the governments, in the sense of proposing mechanisms for closer collaboration and agreement among organisms of the State and civil society, is worth considering. This innovation should be directed towards achieving the implementation of specific commitments made by the governments in the Summits. The challenge lies in making government representatives feel that they are participants in this initiative and make clear the benefits that their participation brings to their governmental work.

System of coordination: Both National and Regional Coordinators mentioned the importance of the role they played during the implementation of the project and how helpful it was to have a General Coordinator. For this reason, any future initiative should continue to strengthen these roles and continue to give more administrative and financial responsibility to the Regional Coordinators. It is also seen as important to have specialized support to improve the methodology of evaluation of the governmental commitments and the design of strategies for national and international dissemination.

Relationship with the official process of the Summits: Since the evaluation indicates that the project has made concrete advances in improving the relationship between governments and civil society in the framework of the Summits and supporting the specific work of the Secretariat of the Summits of the OAS, it is extremely relevant to move forward towards a closer working relationship among government representatives to SIRG, technical teams of the OAS and the Secretariat of the Summits in order to improve the mechanisms for dialogue and collaborative work of CSOs in the Summit process and the OAS. The strategic support of governments and international organisms linked to the Summit process are crucial for achieving a real civil society influence on this process.

The new guidance of the OAS under the Secretariat of José Miguel Insulza and the deficiencies acknowledged in the last Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata are opportunities and challenges that motivate this network of civil society organizations to continue working for the Summit processes to become a better reflection of the new method of approaching multilateral processes of integration, increasing its levels of transparency, credibility and legitimacy.

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