

AG/DEC. 41(XXXV-O/05)

DECLARATION OF FLORIDA DELIVERING THE BENEFITS OF DEMOCRACY (Adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 7, 2005)

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the member states of the Organization of American States (OAS), attending the thirty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly of the OAS, at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, United States of America;

REAFFIRMING the commitment of the member states to uphold the principles, duties, and rights of the OAS Charter, in particular those set out in its Articles 1, 3, 10, 11, 12, and 33, and to act in accordance therewith in their inter-American relations;

BEARING IN MIND that the Inter-American Democratic Charter establishes that the peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it, and that democracy is essential for the social, political, and economic development of the peoples of the Americas;

DETERMINED to promote and defend democracy on the basis of the commitments arising from the OAS Charter and the Inter-American Democratic Charter;

RECOGNIZING that the Inter-American Democratic Charter serves as a positive example to all those who aspire to democracy;

CONSIDERING that adherence to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, as the standard that enables observance and defense of democratic values and principles, strengthens and is a key element for member states' full participation in the inter-American system, pursuant to the principles of the OAS Charter;

COMMITTED to advancing the prosperity, democratic values, democratic institutions, and security of our Hemisphere;

DETERMINED to adopt and implement those actions required to generate productive employment, reduce poverty, and especially eradicate extreme poverty, while taking into account the different economic realities and conditions of the countries of the Hemisphere, and that the elimination of extreme poverty is essential to the promotion and consolidation of democracy and constitutes a common and shared responsibility of the American States;

RECOGNIZING that the stated goals require the creation of decent, productive jobs, and that liberalized trade without distortive effects and an effective multilateral financial system will contribute to these goals, thereby reinforcing democratic stability in the region;

ADDITIONALLY RECOGNIZING the legitimate aspirations of all the peoples of the Americas to live in democracy and enjoy the rights and benefits enumerated in the OAS Charter and the Inter-American Democratic Charter;



RECOGNIZING ALSO that all our citizens can freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development, and that every member state has the duty to respect this;

AWARE that democracy and social and economic development are interdependent and are mutually reinforcing;

CONSIDERING that our citizens embrace democracy as the form of government that should deliver a better quality of life;

AWARE that each of the sectors of society can contribute to attaining the benefits of democracy through equitable economic growth that fosters social inclusion and social mobility, integral development, and income distribution;

RECOGNIZING ALSO the importance of participation by civil society organizations;

AWARE ALSO that the peoples of the Hemisphere are entitled to freedom, fundamental human rights, the respect for dignity and worth of the human person, equal rights of men and women, and the promotion of social progress and better standards of life;

REAFFIRMING the commitment of eliminating all forms of discrimination and intolerance, particularly those based on gender, ethnic origin, race, religion, and disability, as a fundamental element in strengthening democracy;

CONVINCED that countries must be governed democratically, with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, the separation of powers and independence of the judiciary, and democratic institutions – and that the governments of the Americas have an obligation under the Charter of the OAS and the Inter-American Democratic Charter to promote and defend democracy and must be answerable to their peoples;

EMPHASIZING that for democracy to prosper governments must be responsive to the legitimate aspirations of their people, and must work to provide their people with the tools and opportunities to improve their lives;

CONVINCED that in order for national development policies to achieve these objectives, both developed and developing nations alike must fulfill their international commitments;

CONVINCED ALSO that multilateralism and cooperation among sovereign states play an important role in supporting national efforts to consolidate democracy, promote social development, and fight corruption;

REAFFIRMING that, as the premier multilateral forum of the Hemisphere, the OAS has a unique role in strengthening democratic institutions and consolidating representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of nonintervention;



RECOGNIZING that in the Declaration on Security in the Americas we reaffirmed that representative democracy is an indispensable condition for the stability, peace, and development of the states of the Hemisphere and that our cooperation in addressing traditional threats and new threats, concerns, and other challenges to security is also based on shared values and common approaches, including full respect for democracy, international law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms;

COGNIZANT of the hemispheric and global efforts to address the threat posed by terrorism, drug trafficking, and other international criminal activities that threaten our democratic way of life and our freedom to live and prosper in peace; and

COGNIZANT ALSO of the commitment made to active solidarity in the fight against poverty, illiteracy, low levels of human development, social and political instability, environmental degradation, and the spread of lethal infectious diseases;

RECALLING that the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration have become hemispherically and globally accepted benchmarks of broader progress, embraced by donors, developing countries, civil society and major development institutions alike;

RECOGNIZING that the Declaration of Margarita, on poverty, equity, and social inclusion, affirms our determination and commitment to urgently combat the serious problems of poverty, social exclusion, and inequity, which affect, in varying degrees, the countries of the Hemisphere; and to face the causes that generate them and their consequences and create favorable conditions for socioeconomic development with equity to promote more just societies;

RECOGNIZING ALSO that in the CIDI Strategic Plan the member states establish a partnership for development that entails the implementation of cooperation programs based on partnerships that support measures to combat poverty and include civil society and the private sector towards this end;

RECOGNIZING ALSO the need to work together to better deliver the benefits of democracy to the citizens of the Hemisphere, and to that end,

DECLARE THAT:

1. The Organization of American States should continue building on the ideals and commitments of the OAS Charter and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, working together to advance shared political and economic values to make this a Hemisphere of democratic, stable, and prosperous nations;

2. The Secretary General shall be entrusted with presenting to the Permanent Council, in the near future, a report for its consideration and analysis that describes the manner in which the Inter-American Democratic Charter has been implemented since its entry into force in 2001.

3. The Secretary General shall be instructed, after engaging in consultations with the Permanent Council, and taking into account the purposes and principles of the OAS Charter, in particular that of promoting and consolidating representative democracy, to devise proposals for timely, effective, balanced, gradual initiatives for cooperation, as appropriate, in addressing situations that might affect the workings of the political process of democratic institutions or the legitimate exercise of power, in keeping with the provisions of Charter IV of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, with respect for the principle of nonintervention and the right of self-determination of peoples, and to present those proposals to the Permanent Council.

4. It is reaffirmed that the Secretary General may bring to the attention of the Permanent Council, in the exercise of the authority contained in the OAS Charter and pursuant to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, those situations likely to lead to action under the said Charters.

5. The Permanent Council is instructed, for the purpose of facilitating regional cooperation to strengthen representative democracy and good governance, to consider, in cooperation with Governments, in an ongoing manner, initiatives to support these areas, in accordance with the provisions of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and with the circumstances surrounding democratic processes in the region, taking into consideration the Secretary General's report and proposals, the efforts of other regional and subregional organizations, and the contributions of civil society in the context of Article 26 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and resolution AG/RES. 1991 (XXXIV-O/04), "Increasing and Strengthening Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities."

6. Encouragement is given to the Working Group to Negotiate the Social Charter of the Americas and a Plan of Action, so that its work may serve effectively to strengthen existing OAS instruments on democracy, integral development, and the fight against poverty.

7. The relevant OAS entities will facilitate the creation of cooperative hemispheric networks, taking into account the Declaration on Security in the Americas, to combat transnational organized crime, criminal gangs, drug trafficking, corruption, trafficking in persons, and other criminal activities that threaten citizens and democratic societies.

8. The Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI), in cooperation with the relevant cooperative hemispheric networks, will formulate strategies to combat poverty, illiteracy, low levels of human development, social problems, and environmental degradation.

9. The Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) will convoke a Special Meeting of that body in the second half of 2005 to adopt a Strategic Plan for Partnership for Development 2006-2009, as envisaged in Article 95 of the OAS Charter, taking into account the interdependent relationship of democracy and social and economic development.



10. During the second half of 2005, pursuant to the commitment acquired under the Declaration of Margarita, a joint meeting of the Permanent Council and CEPCIDI shall be convened to contribute to the monitoring, evaluation, and oversight of the eight development goals set in the Declaration of the United Nations Millennium Summit for 2015.