

THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Chapter XVI of the Charter describes the functions and attributes of the General Secretariat, the OAS' central and permanent organ headquartered in Washington, D.C. Elected by the General Assembly, the Secretary General directs the General Secretariat, serves as its legal representative and participates in all meetings of the Organization with voice but without vote. The Secretary General has the authority to bring to the attention of the General Assembly or the Permanent Council any matter that, in his judgment, could affect the peace and security of the Hemisphere or the development of the member states. It is the Secretary General's responsibility to establish whatever offices he deems necessary within the General Secretariat, to determine the number of staff members, appoint them, regulate their duties and functions, and fix their remuneration. The Assistant Secretary General, also elected by the General Assembly, is the Secretary of the Permanent Council and an advisory officer to the Secretary General, whose functions he performs during the latter's temporary absence or permanent disability. The Assistant Secretary General also acts as the Secretary General's representative in all matters which the latter entrusts to him.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

The Office of the Secretary General, under Article 111 of the OAS Charter and in accordance with the measures and policies determined by the General Assembly and the pertinent resolutions of the Councils, performs high-level management functions related to the promotion of economic, social, legal, educational, scientific, and cultural relations in the member states of the Organization.

Office of the Secretary General

In this reporting period, the Office of the Secretary General, within the purview of its assigned functions, supported and complemented the activities of the various organs, secretariats, departments, and units of the Organization. Its efforts focused on three principal areas. In the area of external affairs, it sought to support the Organization's activities to enhance its status as the principal inter-American multilateral political body and its image on the world stage. In terms of the Organization's substantive activities, it concentrated on building and strengthening democracy and governance; broadening and stepping up human rights protection activities; promoting development while ensuring inclusiveness and equity; and developing a multidimensional security policy to deal effectively with the major problems affecting the inhabitants of the Americas. As for the Organization's internal affairs, the Office's activities were aimed at strengthening and reinforcing administrative and communications mechanisms of the General Secretariat, so that it might meet its responsibilities with greater efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

The Office also conducted investigations, prepared drafts for speeches of the Secretary General, and acted as liaison with the permanent missions, government agencies, and civil society. It organized the Secretary General's attendance at presidential inaugurations in Peru, Colombia,

México, and Nicaragua; his participation in the Sixteenth Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government and in the South American Summit; his official visits to heads of member states; and his participation in ministerial conferences and other international conferences and events, including meetings at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

On the administrative front, the Office of the Secretary General designed the changes set forth in Executive Order 05–13 Rev. 3, notably the incorporation of Ambassador Alexandre Addor Neto as Assistant Secretary for Multidimensional Security, the formation of the Department of State Modernization and Governance in the Secretariat for Political Affairs, and the Program for Universal Civil Registry in the Americas within the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development.

Finally, the Office of the Secretary General, together with the Secretariat for Administration and Finance, prepared the proposed budget for 2008, which the Secretary General presented to the Preparatory Committee of the General Assembly.

Department of Planning, Control, and Evaluation

The Department of Planning, Control, and Evaluation (DPCE) was created to coordinate planning, control, and evaluation within the General Secretariat, including its secretariats, departments, and offices. Its specific functions are (a) to develop and administer instruments for the coordinated management of those processes and of project management; and (b) to develop the institutional statistics necessary for strategic decision-making. The Department also acts as Technical Secretariat of the Project Evaluation Committee.

The DPCE went into operation in January 2006 with an initial team of one director and five professionals. Later they were joined by three other professionals, in addition to another professional contracted by the Government of Spain to administer the Spanish Fund for the OAS.

Between March and December 2006, the DPCE developed and implemented the annual operational planning procedure, completing the prototype for its management. Initially this prototype was used to formulate the 2007 operating plan, which included identifying 964 operating goals and their costs and assigning responsibility for the tasks to organizational units. The Department also completed the prototype for management of the quarterly operational oversight process, which includes reporting the degree of fulfillment of operational goals and measuring the likelihood of their full execution during the budgetary period, as well as conceptual design, functional analysis, and operational testing of the first version of information systems to support operational planning management, which was developed by the Department of Information and Technology Services.

The Department organized and conducted five training workshops on project design instruments and developed and secured approval by the Project Evaluation Committee of the technical instruments (variables, qualification scales, and weighting factors) for evaluating the relevance of programs and projects. On that same basis the Department performed preliminary technical evaluations of 119 new project profiles, 91 FEMCIDI projects under way in 2005, and 51 projects of the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security under way in that same period.

In this period the Department also provided technical secretariat services for the implementation and administration of the Spanish Fund for the OAS, including technical assistance to OAS staff members in project profile design, coordination of preparations by the General Secretariat, the Spanish mission to the OAS, and the official Spanish agencies, and coordination of project profile design, evaluation, and selection.

Department of Legal Services

The Department of Legal Services (DLS) is a dependency of the Office of the Secretary General. Its mandate is set out in Annex A of Executive Order 05-13 Rev. 2.

During the period under review, the DLS responded in writing to 1,030 queries from divisions of the GS/OAS, from the political organs and from member state delegations. Of these queries, 457 involved legal opinions and 220 agreements were reviewed.

It also collaborated in drawing up regulatory instruments and in reviewing administrative memoranda. It participated in meetings held by the Assistant General Secretariat with respect to preparations for the General Assembly in the Dominican Republic and reviewed the corresponding agreement. It assisted the SEDI in preparing and negotiating agreements for project execution and represented its divisions before the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Within the General Secretariat, it advised the Chief of Staff of the Secretary General, the Department of Sustainable Development, the Executive Secretariat of the IACHR, the Secretariat for Administration and Finance, the Department of Human Resources, the Secretariat for Political Affairs, the Office of Procurement Services, the Office of General Services, the Executive Secretariat of CICAD, the Department for the Prevention of Threats against Public Security, the Trust for the Americas and the Young Americas Business Trust.

It cooperated with the Department of Human Development in editing a new Scholarship Manual and provided legal counsel at meetings of the CEPACIDI Subcommittee on Partnership for Development Policies regarding the manual. It also collaborated on reviewing agreements for project execution and on electoral observation and advised MAPP/OAS in Colombia on matters relating to contracts, labor, privileges, and immunities. It cooperated with the OAS Special Mission in Haiti and collaborated with the Office of the Inspector General on audits and investigations conducted at headquarters and GS/OAS Offices in the Member States.

It advised the General Assembly, the Permanent Council, and CAAP on administrative, budgetary, labor, and procedural matters. It prepared draft resolutions, submitted written opinions on regulatory and procedural matters, and provided assistance at the meetings of CIDI, CEPACIDI, and the Management Board of the IACD.

It followed and facilitated, as observer and advisor, the negotiations for granting fifteen-year contracts for mobile cellular telecommunications services, at the request of the Ecuadoran government and COM/CITEL. It also advised the General Directorate of IICA on institutional, administrative, and labor matters, and the Retirement and Pension Committee.

It represented the Secretary General before the Administrative Tribunal and advised the hearing officers and the Reconsideration Committee.

Department of External Relations

The mission of the Department of External Relations is to advise the various dependencies of the general secretariat and bodies of the organization on all activities related to external relations, while promoting and maintaining contacts with the permanent observers, the nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, the organization's host country, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations, among others. Its two sections are public relations and institutional relations.

- **The Public Relations Section**

The public relations section of the department promoted the participation and collaboration of observer countries through resource mobilization, document and information exchange, informational meetings, visits by high-level government officials, and special events. It also acted as technical secretariat to the resource mobilization committee.

In 2006, the Lecture Series of the Americas, coordinated by the Department, had a number of prestigious speakers, including Prof. Jeffrey Sachs; former president of Brazil Fernando Henrique Cardoso; Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón; Mr. Nicholas Negroponte, founder of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Media Lab and chairman of One Laptop per Child; Mr. Jeffrey Puryear, Vice President for Social Policy at the Inter-American Dialogue; Mr. George Soros, Chairman of the Open Society Institute; and Ms. Huguette Labelle, Chair of Transparency International. These lectures were broadcast by EDUSAT, Venevisión, the Voice of the Americas, and HITN, among others. In 2006, the Lecture Series continued to receive support from the University of San Martín de Porres and from the Governments of Qatar and the Hellenic Republic. A book on the Lecture Series of the Americas was also published, in cooperation with the University of San Martín de Porres.

In March 2006, the Department held the 23rd Model OAS General Assembly (MOAS), for university students of the Hemisphere, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, with support from the President of the Dominican Republic, Leonel Fernández, its Secretariat of State for Higher Education, Science, and Technology, the Global Foundation for Democracy and Development (FUNGLODE), and the United Nations Association of the Dominican Republic (ANU-RD). In April 2006, the Department cosponsored, with the Inter-American Institute of Diplomacy the Washington MOAS (WMOAS), for universities. In October 2006, it held the 24th MOAS, for university students, at the *Universidad del Norte* (UNINORTE) in Barranquilla, Colombia. Finally, in November, the 25th MOAS, for high school students, was held in Washington, D.C. Each of these model assemblies was attended by between 350 and 500 students from various high schools and universities in the Hemisphere. They were broadly covered by local media outlets.

In May 2006, together with the Baker Institute at Rice University in Houston, Texas, the seventh colloquium of the Americas Project was held; the topic was the status of freedom of expression in

the Americas. In this reporting period, the Department supported the Organized Crime and Gangs Section of the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security. It also published the report on the meeting of spokespersons of OAS member state governments that took place in 2005 in Santiago, Chile.

- The Institutional Relations Section

New channels of communication with members of the United States Congress were developed in this period. This led to meetings between the Secretary General and 31 Congressional representatives in 2006. The Department worked with other OAS bodies, and with the states involved, to achieve the extension of preferential tariffs for the Andean countries. Support was provided to the various areas of the Organization in their efforts to maintain substantive contacts with the Congress of the host country.

The Department implemented the OAS specialized briefing program, provided to 5,124 persons in 2006, including diplomats, government officials, members of the military, students, political analysts, and the general public. The briefings emphasize the work of the Organization, include tours of the historic building, and are an excellent outreach tool.

Staff of the Department maintained close relations with academic institutions, think tanks, and opinion leaders in the Washington area to promote OAS affairs. To that end, they organized events and participated in bilateral meetings and forums. The Department gave presentations to highly influential local and national groups, including the American University, the Women's Foreign Policy Group, the Women's Bar Association, and the Heritage Foundation.

Department of Press and Communications

The principal mission of the Department of Press and Communications is to publicize the political discourse of the General Secretariat of the OAS. Without changing its basic mission, the Department has been dedicating its efforts over the last two years to projecting an image of an organization that has an increasingly larger presence in the Hemisphere and whose opinion is heard and respected on the international scene. Distributing official releases reporting on the activities of the Offices of the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General, and on the meetings of the Permanent Council represents the central point around which the work of disseminating information revolves.

The Organization's strategic goals, which speak of democracy, development, human rights, legitimate electoral processes, and good and transparent governments, have been embodied in the information released to such an extent that in many countries in the Hemisphere the OAS is applauded or criticized because it is associated with the defense of those principles. The participation of the OAS in electoral processes that have occurred during the period under review has, in turn, become engraved in the memory of analysts and citizens and the Electoral Observation Missions of the OAS are directly associated with the legitimacy of those processes. The OAS is also associated with the defense of human rights and the resolution of political crisis, all of which is due to a great extent to adequate acceptance in public opinion of the message emanating from the Organization.

How can the final product of the task of dissemination be measured? It can be measured by quantifying the appearance of OAS/Press-generated information in the media. The results cannot be concealed: the news appears or does not appear in the press that is reviewed daily. The conclusion is that the information taken up by the media is quantitatively and qualitatively better than in earlier years. The daily information summary (Newsclips) prepared by the team of journalists, based on major news appearing in the most important newspapers of the 35 member states, reflects the quantity and quality of the information coming from the Department of Press and Communications.

To be noted at this point is the quality that the Department has been achieving in the production of information. Subjects are conceptualized, described, and developed with greater mastery and talent. The discourse of the General Secretariat on democratic sustainability, against drug trafficking or in favor of human rights is repeated in releases in a consistent and persistent way until it is embedded in the social consciousness.

The operating method has continued to improve until finding a daily method of operation (including weekends) according to the routine of a traditional communications medium. Journalistic production, which includes news development and photography, has been the basis of the press work that is provided daily to an increasing number of media outlets in the Hemisphere that demand high-quality and timely information.

In this type of interaction with the media, the mailing list used by the Department of Press and Communications grew by 200 percent between May 2006 and May 2007 in terms of print media alone. This phenomenon has to do not only with the quality of the information disseminated but also with the projection of the Organization's image. Newspapers and news agencies in the Hemisphere increasingly demand releases and information, which means continuous revision of the media list and connection data in order to achieve targeted distribution that is satisfactory to the users.

Similarly and as a result of the information generated by political actors of the OAS, the number of releases increased significantly. A self-sustaining cycle was produced: the more information appears in the media, the greater the interest in generating news; and the more news is generated, the more its presence is noted in the media. However, the market is selective and, unfortunately, information that is "sold" is the most polemical. Great efforts have been made to make room for all large projects developed by the Under-Secretariats of the General Secretariat, although the results are not always satisfactory. Similarly, the Department of Press provides balanced coverage of all activities that take place at the OAS and all of them are reported in releases distributed to the same recipients. However, not all releases are taken up by the media. "*Good news, no news,*" continues to be the prevailing rule in the media.

Photographic work done by professionals has increased by 300 percent. Images accompanied by explanatory text, a formula in use since 2005 to make the topics to which the media are most resistant attractive, continue to be widely accepted. The photographic spreads shown daily on the OAS website after each official activity are an increasing source of input for newspapers in North, Central, and South America.

The magazine *Américas* has gradually made room for political subjects. The opinions of prime ministers and presidents cover the pages of a publication that inspires affection among the OAS community and now draws the interest of a larger number of subscribers. Just as important newspapers reproduce the political information produced by our Organization, they now reproduce the international articles appearing in *Américas* as well.

Office of Protocol

The Office of Protocol plans and coordinates the official ceremonies of the political bodies of the Organization, the Permanent Council, the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, and the departments of the General Secretariat. It serves as liaison between the U.S. Department of State and the permanent missions on matters related to registration and visas for staff of the missions and to the privileges and immunities of diplomats accredited to the Organization. It also organizes and coordinates the use of the Main Building for protocolary or social-cultural functions and prints and keeps current the Directory of Permanent Missions on the Organization's intranet.

During this reporting period, the Office organized protocolary meetings for visits by the presidents of Jamaica, Haiti (president-elect), Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. It organized ceremonies and protocolary meetings for Pan American Day, for the birthday of Simón Bolívar, and to commemorate the Discovery of America - Encounter of Two Worlds. The Office coordinated the presentation of credentials by the Permanent Representatives of Colombia, Chile, Canada, Mexico, Uruguay, and Honduras, as well as courtesy visits by various permanent observers. Farewell receptions were organized for the ambassadors of Peru, Honduras, Chile, the Bahamas, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Canada, the United States, and Uruguay. Letters of congratulations were prepared and sent to the permanent representatives and observers recognizing their independence days.

The Office reviewed and processed some 4,000 applications from the permanent missions and their staff for accreditation; issuance, extension, renewal, and changes of visas; work permits and their renewal; importation and purchase of duty-free goods; and issuance and renewal of tax exemption cards and driver's licenses.

Summits Secretariat

The Summits Secretariat renders technical and logistical support to the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG); manages the Summit of the Americas Information Network; preserves the institutional memory of the Summit process; follows up on mandates issued by the Heads of State and Government; chairs the Joint Summits Working Group; and coordinates participation by civil society and indigenous peoples in OAS activities and in the Summits process.

The Secretariat supported the meetings of the SIRG in preparation for the Fourth Summit of the Americas. Specifically, it presented to member states the format for implementation of mandates of the Fourth Summit, coordinated participation by social groups in the Summits process, and facilitated the transfer of the SIRG chair to the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, host of the Fifth Summit of the Americas. It also provided secretariat services to the

Joint Summits Working Group, comprised of 12 bodies of the inter-American system and the United Nations, which met four times in 2006.

The Secretariat also supported the linkage of ministerial meetings and other sectoral meetings with the Summits process. It coordinated civil society participation in the Sixth Meeting of Ministers of Justice or of Ministers or Attorneys General of the Americas (REMJA VI); the Seventh Conference of Ministers of Defense; the Third Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Culture; the First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Sustainable Development; and the Thirty-third Assembly of Delegates of the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), among others.

The Summits Secretariat provided technical support to meetings of the Permanent Council Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities by preparing reports and the draft work plan and analyzing applications from nongovernmental organizations to be registered for OAS activities (presently 206 civil society organizations are registered with the Organization).

In the context of the thirty-sixth regular session of the OAS General Assembly, the Secretariat organized the dialogue among representatives of 220 nongovernmental organizations, the Secretary General and the foreign ministers on the various items on the inter-American agenda and supported the participation of civil society representatives in the ministerial meetings and specialized conferences held in the Permanent Council framework. The Summits Secretariat published and distributed to the member states, to civil society organizations registered with the Organization, and to government agencies that implement national development policies the document **“Recommendations of Civil Society, 2002–2006.”** It contains civil society views on regional challenges and the suggestions civil society organizations have presented over the past four years. With support from the Open Society Institute, the Summits Secretariat has been implementing, since 2004, a program entitled “Inter-American Initiative for Cooperation with Civil Society, 2006-2007”. Under this initiative, nine projects are being executed in the region, at a cost of US\$100.000,00, and civil society participation in the Summits process has been facilitated.

In order to disseminate information on the implementation of Summit mandates, to publicize the mandates of the Fourth Summit, and to promote their implementation, the Secretariat published the fourth volume in the series **“Official Documents of the Summits of the Americas Process”** and the **Summit Information Bulletins** and updated the web page www.cumbredelasamericas.org (or, in English, www.summitoftheamericas.org) on the mandates in each area of the inter-American agenda.

In terms of information, the Summits Secretariat has a database of nearly 4.600 civil society organizations, 700 indigenous organizations, and nearly 1.000 private sector trade associations, to which it periodically sends information on OAS and Summit-related activities. The database has made it possible to disseminate information to those organizations so as to generate feedback between the General Secretariat, the member states, and the civil society organizations in the implementation of Summit mandates.

The Secretariat also supported, technically and logistically, the OAS Permanent Council's Working Group to Prepare the Draft American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Finally, in support of the tasks involved in the implementation and follow-up of Summit mandates, the Secretariat mobilized external funds from member states (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, El Salvador, the United States, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Nicaragua, and Guyana), members of the JSWG (IDB and CAF), governmental development agencies, and the Open Society Institute (OSI).