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The Organization of American States, the United Nations Organization, Civil Society, and Conflict Prevention

Andrés Serbin

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Coordinadora Regional de
Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales



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Presentation

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This set of materials represents an invaluable contribution both for the work of civil society organizations in different fields and for

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Plataforma
Latinoamericana y
Caribeña de Prevención
de Conflictos y
Construcción de Paz
(PLACPAZ)



Coordinadora Regional
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Global Partnership
for the Prevention
of Armed Conflict
(GPPAC)

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The Organization of American States, the United Nations Organization, Civil Society, and Conflict Prevention

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Conflicts and Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: New Challenges in a Changing Environment.

With the end of the Cold War, the predominance of interstate conflict within the international system has tended to decrease, while intrastate and transnational conflicts involving State and non-State actors has grown. The Americas have shown no exception to this trend, notwithstanding that the fact that, comparatively, the region is perceived as less prone to armed conflict than other regions of the world. As shown in a series of studies prepared by CRIES¹, since the confrontation between Ecuador and Peru in 1995, and with the exception of the current tensions between Ecuador and Colombia, there is no interstate conflict in the region which could escalate to armed confrontation. Nonetheless, it must be noted that there has been a rise in intrastate conflicts with complex internal articulations related to social and political polarization. Some of these conflicts are also characterized by transnational links and impact (such as population and refugee flows and displacements, development of arms and drug-trafficking networks, and regional cross-border spillovers). All such conflicts have had a significant impact on the increase of social violence and political instability. With the exception of the Colombian situation, there are neither conventional nor civil wars currently going on in Latin America or the Caribbean.

Internal armed conflict can be primarily linked to the State incapacity or failure in preventing, containing or solving conflicts among groups². In Latin America and the Caribbean, as the current OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza aptly expresses, most of the conflicts and internal crisis basically respond to the “lack of State”³. Although the development of International Law has increasingly contributed to the reduction of interstate conflicts, the capacity of the State and the rule of law have weakened, and the State’s capacity to implement conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms vis-à-vis the new emerging domestic and transnational threats has weakened as well. New forms of violence have emerged, more diffused and less identifiable than conventional interstate war, which make it difficult to draw clear differences between violent conflict and armed conflict.

Therefore, the main challenges facing international and regional organizations in addressing conflict prevention are linked to new security threats and a diversified spectrum of new forms of violence emerging within the region. The identification and weighing of these new threats, together with the persistence of interstate border disputes, generates widespread concerns and an important debate on hemispheric security and democratic stability among the governments of the region. Different forms of social violence and insecurity derived from these threats are now becoming a priority to Latin American and Caribbean citizens and civil society organizations alike, displacing previous concerns associated to military regimes, political/military confrontations, and human rights abuses and violations.

The emergence of these new threats after the end of the Cold War, in a new international environment where conventional interstate wars are being replaced by internal strife and violence with regional and international repercussions, has created the conditions for an increasing involvement of regional organizations in the preservation of regional peace and security. In this regard, for several reasons (including geographical proximity, better knowledge of the regional environment, and strong inter-regional links) regional organizations seem to be best suited for implementing new conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies⁴.

In the Americas, there exist several well established organizations oriented towards conflict prevention and resolution. Most of these organizations are part of the Inter-American system, including the Organization of American States (OAS). Historically, the focus of the OAS agenda has been on peaceful resolution of interstate conflicts, among other relevant issues. Although the OAS has neither a specific mandate nor a structured policy for conflict prevention, there is a well-established set of inter-related programs and mechanisms and ad hoc measures within the organization, working towards conflict management and resolution. Notwithstanding this, the OAS confronts similar challenges to those facing other regional organizations in general – the lack of political will and political difficulties to build consensus among its member states in order to promote operational and structural prevention. Additionally, the deeply-rooted principles of non-intervention and national sovereignty contribute to the traditional reluctance of Latin American

and Caribbean countries to accept external interference by an organization historically associated with the prevalence of US predominance.

The OAS is not the only organization in the region dealing with peace and security. Most of the sub-regional integration schemes eventually provide legal frameworks and juridical mechanisms for dispute solving, and promote the establishment of peace zones and confidence-building measures, as in the case of MERCOSUR and the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), or have created broader conceptual frameworks as in the case of the Framework Treaty of Democratic Security in Central America⁵. More recently, the creation of the Union of Nations of the South⁶ fostered the conditions for the establishment of a South American Defense Council, proposed originally by Brazil⁷. In most cases, the functionality and effectiveness of those mechanisms remains to be seen, but in the case of UNASUR they can eventually compete with the OAS or supplement it. However, the OAS is the sole regional organization with Inter-American and hemispheric scope, and includes also the United States, Canada and the English, Dutch and French-speaking Caribbean states.

The Organization of American States and Conflict Prevention: Main Mechanisms and New Structures

The Organization of American States (OAS) is an inter-governmental regional organization which brings together the nations of the Western Hemisphere⁸ and, since its creation in the late 40's, it has traditionally dealt with Inter-American relations. One of the oldest inter-governmental organizations in the world, it was created after the end of the Second World War, mostly as a mechanism to prevent the spread of communism in the Western Hemisphere, particularly during the Cold War. The OAS Charter enshrined the principles of non-intervention, juridical equity and the peaceful settlement of disputes between states. In 1948, the Bogotá Pact further specified the normative framework and operational mechanisms for peaceful dispute resolution, including a role for the OAS Secretary General using his good offices to facilitate the peaceful resolution of controversies, and the mandate of the Permanent Council of re-

representatives of the member states, which provide a forum and an institutional framework for the discussion of differences between them.

However, these mechanisms were sidelined during the Cold War because of the emphasis on the “internal threats to national security”, associated with communism and USSR interests. Within this context, the OAS was unable to prevent US subversive operations against Cuba or Cuban support to insurgent movements through Latin America from the 1960s onward⁹. Nor was it able to prevent or contribute to solve the Argentine-Great Britain Malvinas/Falklands war in 1982, the US-led invasion of Grenada in 1983, or the US invasion of Panamá in 1989¹⁰. In recent years, progress has been made on wider measures to prevent the escalation of interstate disputes into war, led by a growing awareness of the new threats to regional security. By the early 1990s, Latin America was cresting on the “third wave” of democratization, and the region boasted a greater number of elected governments than ever before. Following these democratic transitions and the decline of anti-communism as the main US foreign policy concern in the Americas, member states attempted to renovate the OAS as a multilateral institution and to modernize its structure and capacity¹¹, particularly after the US started to shift its strategic priorities to other regions of the world.

Nevertheless, after the end of the Cold War and the September 11th attacks, most international organizations, including the OAS and the UN, were forced to take on new challenges, as there was a significant shift in the nature of armed and violent conflicts in the world. The new challenges and demands posed by these new conflicts and threats re-focused their priorities in terms of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. As a result, a new starting point was defined at the core of the OAS with the approval of the concept of “multidimensional security” in 2003, which served as a basis to foster the restructuring of the organization.

The process of restructuring the OAS was characterized by ups and downs, particularly after a difficult transition from the period led by the

former SG César Gaviria, to the recently elected new SG Insulza, with the resignation, after two months in office, of the previously elected SG Miguel Angel Rodriguez. In the 2005 election, for the first time the winning candidate running for Secretary General - the Chilean José Miguel Insulza - was not initially supported by the United States, which evidenced a significant shift in the regional political environment after the election of center-left and left-leaning governments in many member states, generally reluctant to endorse US foreign policy positions. This difficult transition affected and delayed the re-structuring process until 2006.

Within the context of the “new hemispheric security agenda” emerging in the late 1990s, OAS member states agreed on several crucial issues: the establishment of the Committee on Hemispheric Security to provide civilian leadership on the coordination of security policy in the hemisphere, an important step to overcome the legacy of past military regimes; the implementation of confidence and security-building measures (CSMs) and to discuss and approve a “multidimensional” notion of regional security that goes beyond traditional threats to territorial integrity to encompass issues like drug- trafficking and, on a more controversial level, terrorism.

Accordingly with the implicit division of labor between the UN and the OAS, notwithstanding the reluctance of some member states, the latter has focused its actions on conflict-solving and prevention on a more political level, in two fundamental areas – the support and strengthening of democracy as a priority to guarantee institutional frameworks for dialogue and pacific resolution of domestic conflicts, and the development of mechanisms for hemispheric security for maintaining regional stability and peace¹².

Under this general approach, five specific areas of the OAS were involved, since the beginning of the century, in conflict prevention, and “have an interconnected effect and had been a major factor in the relatively good performance of the Americas in conflict prevention and resolution”¹³. Those five areas within the OAS were: the already mentioned “good offices” capacity of the Permanent Council

The OAS was unable to prevent US subversive operations against Cuba. Nor it was able to prevent or contribute to solve the Argentine-Great Britain Malvinas/Falklands war in 1982.

and the Secretary General; the Inter-American system of human rights; the hemispheric security system; mechanisms related to the application of Resolution 1080 and the Washington Protocol, including the subsequent adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter; and the work of the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, which has recently undergone substantial transformations. While these areas were set up for different objectives, such as the preservation and strengthening of democracy, human rights, or the rule of law, most of them have also contributed to the reduction and prevention of violent conflict, within a formal juridical tradition which distinctively characterizes the region¹⁴.

The “Good Offices” of the Permanent Council and of the OAS Secretary General

The Secretary General occupies a key position in the OAS, and is responsible to the General Assembly and its nonvoting participants in all the organization meetings, while the Assistant Secretary General, among other duties, serves as secretary to the Permanent Council of the OAS. Both officials are elected by the General Assembly for a five-year term and can be re-elected once. Established as norm in the OAS Charter, the traditional ad hoc mechanism applied to prevent or avert both interstate disputes and internal conflicts that can threaten the stability of democracy, are the “good offices” of the **Secretary General of the OAS**, or the formation of ad hoc committees to investigate and review the facts in dispute, as stipulated in the Charter of the OAS¹⁵. The Permanent Council may collectively assist member states in the peaceful settlement of disputes, while the Secretary General may act independently to draw attention to relevant issues to the Organization. In this regard, since the beginning of the recent reform of the OAS structure, and currently with the assistance and advise of the Secretary for Political Affairs, the OAS SG can select and contract Special Representatives to deal with specific crisis or conflict situations. The Secretary of Political Affairs is an important innovation regarding the structures needed to assist and support the Secretary General initiatives and “good offices”, both in terms of identifying potentially emerging conflicts and of providing early warning and technical and political support

for conflict prevention. In this regard, monitoring of political and electoral processes in the OAS member states is an important contribution to this end (See Annex 1).

The Inter-American System of Human Rights

The Inter-American System of Human Rights is institutionally based on two main bodies of the organization – the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR), headquartered in Washington, D.C., and the Inter-American Court on Human Rights, located in San José, Costa Rica. The system is autonomous from the OAS, although its mandate is established in the OAS Charter.

The IACHR was established as an OAS advisory group and it was made an official body of the OAS in 1970, with the mandate of keeping vigilance over the observance of human rights. That was the year the American Convention on Human Rights was signed, replacing the earlier, nonbinding American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, promulgated in 1948. Included in the provisions of the American Convention on Human Rights are the right to life, liberty, personal security, habeas corpus, due process, equality before the law, fair trials, freedom from arbitrary arrest, and freedom of speech, assembly, association, political participation, and religion¹⁶. Under the OAS Charter, all member states are bound by the provisions of the Declaration of the Rights of Man. In addition, the majority of member states have ratified the American Convention on Human Rights and accepted the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court. However, several OAS member countries, including the United States and Canada, are still in the process of endorsing the Convention¹⁷.

The IACHR gives special attention to systematic violations of human rights, trying to draw attention to and reverse these violations by issuing special country reports and by including them in a special chapter of its Annual Report to the General Assembly. It also makes special on-site public inspections and organizes press conferences, thus attracting public opinion, and also schedules confidential visits and communications with country authorities. Nevertheless, with the spread of

democracy in the region, onsite inspections have been gradually replaced by the reception of individual complaints as the most effective mechanism for the protection of human rights. The IACHR has jurisdiction to receive complaints against States that have not ratified the Convention or accepted the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights¹⁸.

The Inter-American Court on Human Rights was established by the terms of the Convention in 1979, and its mission is to guarantee the fulfillment of the duties undertaken by member states pursuant to the American Convention on Human Rights, known as Pact of San José. Nonetheless, in its beginning, the Court has had a difficult time gaining momentum because relatively few governments had submitted themselves to its jurisdiction at that time¹⁹. The Court maintains itself significantly independent and autonomous from member states governments in its composition and its decisions, and can process complaints promoted by civil society organizations.

Numerous non-governmental and national governmental institutions participate in the work of the system by providing information, bringing petitions, requesting immediate precautionary measures, and by generally raising the visibility of the abuses and violations of human rights in the region and their relation to conflict potential. In this regard, the system was particularly instrumental during the ruling of military and authoritarian regimes in the region in the 70's and 80's, and provided the legal framework for the development of important human rights organizations and movements in Latin America, which contributed substantially to the re-establishment and consolidation of democracy in the 90's²⁰. The Inter-American System of Human Rights is one of the spheres of the OAS where civil society organizations have been particularly proactive.

The network created by national judicial systems, civil society organizations, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and the Court that make up the Inter-American Human Rights System has proven to be a de facto preventive early warning system able to detect, expose, and, in many instances, dissolve or resolve areas of potential internal

conflict. However, the Commission and the Court have been increasingly affected by a lack of adequate funding and staff to fulfill their functions. Neither of them has enough funding to operate on a permanent basis, which can be attributed both to the reluctance of current democratic governments to keep the system functioning and to less and less concern over human rights violations.

The Hemispheric Security System

Several agreements, mechanisms, and institutions are established within the Inter-American system as part of the **hemispheric security system**. Currently, two of them are particularly relevant as collaborative areas among member States – the Committee on Hemispheric Security of the Permanent Council, and the regular meetings and collaboration among the Ministries of Defense and Armed Forces of the region.

The Committee on Hemispheric Security, created in 1992, is aimed at revamping the agreements and norms for regional security within a changing international context to provide for the exchange of information on several military matters and military budgets, and ensure prior notice of military exercises. Moreover, since its beginning, it also included the implementation of a set of trust and confidence-building measures directed towards preventing the emergence of military conflicts among the states.

Within this context, a new concept of regional security has been taking shape since the 90s, addressing not only interstate conflict, but also transnational crime threats to the nation State and its constitutional structures. Furthermore, following September 11th, strong focus has been placed on the fight against terrorism, mainly under US influence. However, concerns on the role of armed forces as a political actor still persist and strong emphasis is attached to the civilian control of the military.

As a consequence of those initiatives, at the First OAS Conference on Hemispheric Security, convened by the Committee for Hemispheric

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Security in Mexico City in October 2003, member states issued the Declaration on Security in the Americas, recognizing, among other issues, that “Conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes between states are essential to the stability and security of the OAS”²¹. The document evidenced the collective acknowledgement by the member states of the concept of conflict prevention within the general approach of multidimensional security and stressed the importance of establishing a liaison and mechanisms for coordination with civil society organizations on those issues²². Additionally, while reaffirming the role of the UN Security Council as the primary body responsible for international peace and security, it reaffirmed that the OAS “should make every effort to achieve the peaceful settlement of local disputes”²³. The conceptual debate raised during the conference was reflected in the consensual acceptance of **multidimensional security** as a guiding conception, influencing the further internal restructuring of the organization, particularly in the newly formed Secretariat for Multidimensional Security which includes several departments: the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD); the Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), and the Department for the Prevention of Threats against Public Security (see Annex 1).

Notwithstanding the presence and participation of civil society networks and organizations in the 2003 OAS Conference on Hemispheric Security, strong criticism emerged regarding the Declaration on Security in the Americas. The new concept of multidimensional security broadens the traditional definition of national defense to incorporate new threats, including political, economic, social, health, and environmental concerns, “to such an extent that almost any problem can now be considered a security threat”²⁴. Additionally to that, strong criticism is directed to the fact that the concept is so broad in its scope, that its operational implementation became extremely difficult.

The November 2004 VI Conference of Ministers of Defense of the Americas (CMDA), held in Quito, reaffirmed the commitments undertaken at the Special Conference on Hemispheric Security, including the recognition of the multidimensional nature of security in order to address different new threats in the region. It also led to an agreement to enhance regional cooperation with the

UN peacekeeping operations, with a focus on capacity-building for increased inter-operability of member states’ forces²⁵. Conflict prevention was mentioned in the final declaration among the common concerns for security and defense, whether traditional or nontraditional²⁶. Also, point 44 of the Quito declaration underscores the will to strengthen and enhance the links between the Conferences of Ministers of Defense and the Organization of American States²⁷. The Quito Conference was also criticized by civil society and academic institutions, as its final Declaration refers to the new concept of multidimensional security, but emphasizes the threat of terrorism above all else.

Mechanisms for Preserving Democracy and Constitutional Regimes: General Assembly Resolution 108, the “Washington Protocol” and the Inter-American Democratic Charter

The OAS Charter stipulates that representative democracy is both a goal that the organization strives to promote in the region and, at the same time, a condition for membership in the organization²⁸. Nevertheless, until the end of the Cold War this was rather a rhetorical affirmation than an actual commitment. At the beginning of the 1990s, however, there was an evident turning point in this regard. In 1991, the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, a specialized agency for fostering democratic practices, was created, while Resolution 1080 was unanimously approved at the 1991 OAS General Assembly, as a formal mechanism to respond to breakdowns of democracy.

The approval of OAS **Resolution 1080** was an important development for managing internal conflict, subsequently reinforced by the **Washington Protocol**, which amended the OAS Charter. Both mechanisms call for immediate action when democracy is threatened or irregularly interrupted²⁹. Under the Washington Protocol, the Organization has the right to suspend by two-thirds vote a member state whose democratically elected government has been overthrown by force.

As a result of its mandate to examine the crisis and adopt solutions appropriate to the circumstances

and the context of the situation, Resolution 1080 was applied in crisis situations in Peru (1992), Guatemala (1993), Haiti (1991, when the Resolution was put in force for the first time), Venezuela (1992), Paraguay (1996 and 1999), Ecuador (2000), Peru (2000) and Venezuela (2002), when the democratic system was threatened by an unconstitutional application of political or military measures. The application of the Resolution 1080 requires the use of peaceful means of resolution (persuasion, mediation, and good offices), but, eventually, economic sanctions can be recommended. In this regard, Resolution 1080 gives the OAS Secretary General the immediate possibility to act either by examining the situation and bringing information to the Permanent Council or the Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Ministries, or by following specific recommendations of resolutions issued by one of these bodies, without interfering with parallel actions by other organizations³⁰, or in coordination with the UN for activating its complementary powers under Article 7 of the UN Charter.

The **Inter-American Democratic Charter** (IADC), further strengthened these instruments and broadened the cases where the OAS was allowed to intervene in internal crisis. On September 11th, 2001, the IADC was approved unanimously by resolution of a Special General Assembly. In addition to the further expansion of the diplomatic mechanisms available within the OAS and the potential to censure and engage states where serious interruption of democratic rule has occurred, the Charter also added new elements: the notion of a “right to democracy” and governments’ duty to promote and protect it; further specification of the norms for electoral observation and democratic assistance by the OAS; and clearer references to the need to take into account the contribution of civil society. While not stated explicitly, “the Democratic Charter underscores the importance of developing early warning tools and systems (and...) emphasizes preventive action over reactive responses that prevailed in many past OAS instruments to promote and defend democracy”³¹.

The Charter broadens the cases where the OAS is called to intervene³². However, as new forms of crisis develop in the region that often defer from traditional ones, the authoritative and reliable

interpretation of regime violations becomes more elusive and difficult, creating new challenges for the right application of these mechanisms. Nonetheless, since its approval, the IADC has become an important reference tool for supporting and strengthening democracy in the region. The IADC was first applied in Venezuela in April 2002, during the coup against President Chávez³³.

The Promotion and Strengthening of Democratic Governance and Dialogue

Associated to this process, the **Unit for the Promotion of Democracy** (UPD) was established. It was gradually given broad discretionary powers to strengthen democracy in the region through several Special Programs, overcoming the reluctance of OAS member states to

accept the organization’s involvement in issues of a predominant political nature. The three main objectives of the UPD were: a) to strengthen governmental capacity to manage and resolve public policy disputes collaboratively by helping develop the necessary technical competencies and institutional mechanisms within key government institutions; b) to strengthen state-civil society relations by offering technical assistance and specialized services to assist in the

design and implementation of national dialogue process; and c) to strengthen intraregional relations through the implementation of subregional programs to promote dialogue processes. As a mechanism for conflict prevention, linked to the Inter-American Human Rights System, the UPD developed several important Special Missions since its creation in 1991, including the Verification and Support Mission in Nicaragua after the end of the civil war; the support for peace negotiations in Surinam in 1992; the first joint UN-OAS mission in Haiti in 1993 for the verification of the respect for human rights and institutional strengthening; the support for the peace process in Guatemala, the technical cooperation program in Nicaragua, and the National Governance Program in Bolivia, among others³⁴.

UPD’s field missions were primarily concerned with post-conflict activities, but in 2001 the

The Inter-American Democratic Charter (IADC), further strengthened these instruments and widened the options for the activation of the engagement of the OAS in internal crisis.

Special Program for the Promotion of Dialogue and Resolution of Conflicts was created to assist governments and civil society to develop mechanisms for conflict resolution; design long-term intrastate conflict prevention strategies; support national and local efforts to foster dialogue; and build consensus and develop joint resolutions on pressing social and political issues. The focus of the program was on capacity building to strengthen intra-sector and inter-sector relations for conflict resolution and dialogue promotion.

The performance of the UPD demonstrates that it became an effective tool for preventing conflict within and among member states³⁵. The democratization approach promoted by the UPD contributed to underscore that it is essential that the OAS should focus on internal conflict as a source of potential violence and armed conflict, after the predominance of an approach centered on the peaceful settlement of interstate confrontation and disputes. Moreover, it must be noted that the UPD was part of a significant shift of the OAS priorities after the end of the Cold War, particularly after the approval of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

In 2004, the OAS underwent significant changes. The UPD disappeared in an organization-wide restructuring. In its place, the Department of Democratic and Political Affairs (DDPA) was created, and the Office for the Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts (OPRC) was established within it. This new body absorbed the portfolio of projects and activities of the Special Program for the Promotion of Dialogue and Conflict Resolution. The OPRC was designed to continue strengthening and consolidating democratic institutions and practices by developing institutional mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict and enhancing citizen participation in decision-making through dialogue, and by providing both the OAS and its member states with conceptual frameworks, methodologies, strategies, and technical skills from the field of conflict resolution. The mission of the OPRC was clearly defined in terms of assisting the OAS, as well as governments and civil societies of its member states in the design and implementation of dialogue and consensus building processes and conflict prevention and resolution systems through different activities³⁶.

However, after 2005, the OPRC was subjected to a new change and was revamped in a Department of Crisis and Conflict Prevention which was soon transformed into a Department of Democratic Sustainability and Special Missions under the new SG Insulza. This department became part of the structure of a new Secretariat of Political Affairs, which also included the Department for Cooperation and Electoral Monitoring, and the Department of State Modernization and Governance (see Annex 1). As noted above, the Secretariat of Political Affairs, a structure usually resisted by the member states, acts as focal point and main advisory unit to the Secretary General in addressing political issues and crisis that occur or may occur in the hemisphere. The Department of Democratic Sustainability and Special Missions provides advisory and technical services to Special Missions established by the OAS Permanent Council and/or the General Secretariat, or in response to member states' request, using country assessment and analysis exercises, special and exploratory missions, impartial facilitation and negotiation services to support dialogue process, among other measures.

Two relevant Special Missions are currently underway: the Support Mission to the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP, according to its Spanish acronym) and the Good Offices OAS Mission in Colombia and Ecuador (MIB/OEA, according to its Spanish acronym). MAPP was approved by the Permanent Council³⁷ and is oriented towards protecting and rebuilding local communities affected by the process of demobilization of the paramilitary groups in Colombia. MIB/OEA was approved by the XXV Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Relations³⁸ after the recent crisis between the two countries, with the aim of promoting the re-establishment of trust among their governments; developing concrete confidence building measures; overseeing compliance with the commitments undertaken by both countries, and participating in the tasks of prevention and verification of incidents along the border³⁹.

The Department also administers the OAS Fund of Peace, which supports the peaceful resolution of territorial disputes. Created in June 2000, the Fund is a mechanism for providing financial resources at the request of member states, for dealing with unexpected and unforeseen crisis resulting from territorial disputes.

The Department for Democratic Sustainability and Special Missions works closely with the other two departments of the Secretariat of Political Affairs, even if the cooperation basically occurs at the level of department heads and the Secretary rather than on a horizontal level among the staff of the three departments.

Additionally to that, as already mentioned, a Secretariat of Multidimensional Security was created (see Annex 1). This new OAS structure, which includes other four Secretariats, addresses the two current main concerns: democratic governance and repression of transnational organized crime and terrorism, but seems to have relegated to a second place economic democracy and its impact on governance and hemispheric political security⁴⁰, notwithstanding the fact that a Secretariat for Integral Development was also set in place. This Secretariat includes six departments (see Annex 1).

The work of all these programs is based on the OAS Charter and the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

All these recent changes make it difficult to assess if this new structure is developing a more effective work. Specifically in terms of conflict prevention, the balance seems to be mixed, due to the reluctance by member states to accept the implementation of early warning mechanisms (perceived as an intrusion in domestic affairs and a violation of the non-intervention principle), the excessive delegation on the ad hoc “good offices” of the Secretary General as the most effective mechanism of conflict prevention, and the serious limitations preventing more active civil society participation, not to mention a sustained reduction in economic resources and funding⁴¹.

The United Nations and the OAS: the Line between the Use of Force and Functional Cooperation

As stated by a former OAS Secretary General, “The Organization of American States and the United Nations are expressions of different motivations on the part of the States that founded them. The

UN exist first and foremost to avert war and to watch over and maintain international peace, whereas the OAS was established to strengthen hemispheric solidarity... No provision authorizes the use of force by the Organization save in the express exception of external aggression. With that exception, therefore, the use of force has no legitimacy in the legal framework that governs relations among the American States...”⁴².

Articles 52 and 53 of the VIII Chapter of the UN provide a clear justification for the establishment of regional agreements for the pacific settlement of local disputes, “but no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council, with the exception of measures against any enemy state...”⁴³.

All these recent changes on the OAS makes difficult to assess if this new structure is developing a more effective work.

The Declaration on Security of the Americas approved by the OAS member states in 2003 validated this implicit division of labor between the UN and the OAS, reaffirming that the role of the United Nations Security Council consists in maintaining international peace and security, and that the OAS should cooperate with the UN Security Council and focus on the peaceful settlement of local disputes⁴⁴. Although in the Declaration there is no mention of the use of force, there is an implicit understanding

that there is a division of labor between both organizations: while the OAS promotes peace and security in the region through preventive diplomacy, mediation, negotiation and other political mechanisms and distinctive programs fostering democratic governance, the United Nations is also empowered to the use of force in maintaining international peace and security when diplomatic measures are exhausted⁴⁵.

An important precedent worthy of consideration was the OAS’ support to the United States invasion to Dominican Republic to avoid the reinstatement to office of Juan Bosch, a progressive leader, through the approval of an intervening Inter-American force, which discredited and affected the legitimacy of the regional organization. Although the invasion was led by the United States, it developed under the banner of the OAS, with the approval of most of the Latin American

military regimes of the time. However, this decision encountered strong opposition at that time already, although minoritarian, on the grounds that the UN was the sole organization internationally authorized to the legitimate and multilateral use of force⁴⁶. This precedent stands as an important landmark for the further reluctance by the OAS to admit the use of force, this prerogative being thus reserved to the United Nations.

A clear illustration of this situation was the way of dealing with the internal crisis situation in Haiti in 2004, several months after the Declaration of Security in the Americas was issued. After the failure of diplomatic and political measures, and efforts to negotiate a political solution to the crisis, both by the OAS and CARICOM, the decision to intervene was transferred to the Security Council of the UN. Under the pressure of two influential members – the United States and France, concerned about the regional and international instability and the population flux that might eventually result from Haitian crisis and at the request of the Haitian interim President, in February 2004 the UN Security Council authorized the rapid deployment of a Multinational Interim Force (MIF) to stabilize the country. The political transition process, backed by the international community, culminated with the instauration of a transitional government. In June, the MIF transferred authority to a UN peacekeeping force (MINUSTAH), which is still acting in Haiti, with a strong component of South American military⁴⁷.

The transfer of the decision to intervene to the UN Security Council was swift and raised no objections by the OAS member states, which marks a clear difference with the way the previous Haitian crisis had been addressed in the early 1990s. Although this transfer cannot be attributed to the OAS Declaration of Security of the Americas, it was clearly linked to the new regional atmosphere created after the Conference on Hemispheric Security. The experience eroded any further possibility of resorting to OAS mechanisms to legitimize the deployment of a military use of force in a crisis situation. Additionally to that, several Latin American analysts stress the fact that the democratic clause has not played any substantial role in the process⁴⁸.

At the same time, although the Declaration had an influence on the environment in which the

decision on Haiti was taken, there were two related issues not addressed sufficiently by the Declaration: the juridical framework and the criteria for the regulation of the use of force, and the relationship between the OAS and the UN regarding international peace and security in the Americas. Similarly, the reference to conflict prevention in the Declaration on Security of the Americas fails to provide clear and adequate criteria and mechanisms to implement it, particularly when it involves the participation of extra-regional actors. In this regard, notwithstanding the fact that the UN has a distinctive mandate for the prevention of violent conflict under Article 1 of the UN Charter, and that -eventually- regional and subregional organizations are in a unique position to affect several factors that are crucial in the prevention of violent conflict⁴⁹, in the case of the OAS it has not been made clear what are the criteria and the legal framework for a coordinated action with UN agencies on this issue.

On an operational level, since 2001, the current cooperation between the OAS and the UN programs covers a wide range of issues (see Annex II). Besides the collaboration among the OAS Secretariat for Political Affairs and MINUSTAH, UNOPS and UNDP in institution building in Haiti, after a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2004 on issues related to conflict prevention, the OAS SAP has cooperated since 2001 with the UNDP in the modernization of political parties and dialogue promotion⁵⁰ in the region; and with the UN Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD) in electoral observation since 2005. Moreover, the OAS Secretariat for Multidimensional Security develops cooperation with several UN agencies, on matters related to drugs, crime, terrorism, and disarmament. The initial predominance of the UNDP, as a long time established UN agency in Latin America, in the collaboration between the UN and the OAS, instead of the UN DPA, raised some controversy. However, recent meetings between the UN DPA and the OAS Secretariat might eventually deepen this collaboration. In August 2008, a meeting of the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ambassador B. Lynn Pascoe and the head of the Department of Europe and the Americas of the UN DPA with the OAS Secretary José Miguel Insulza and the Secretariat for Political Affairs staff was held in Washington D.C., but the results of this meeting are still to be seen. Nevertheless, in this regard, several areas and procedures for further collaboration were identi-

fied: electoral issues, desk-to-desk relations to address current or potential conflicts, political coordination, joint training initiatives, and an effort towards the systematization of lessons learnt.

A key issue worthy of mention regarding the relations between the OAS and the UN is the distinctive separation of roles, both on a functional and on a territorial level. Due to the widespread importance attached to the principles of non-intervention and national sovereignty in the region, there has been a historical reluctance by Latin American and Caribbean countries to give a relevant role in peace and security matters in the region to main governing bodies of the UN. For most of the regional actors – governments, inter-governmental agencies, media or civil society organizations, the perception regarding the UN is that its role is circumscribed to the international sphere, and that regional and sub-regional organizations, including the OAS, are better fitted to address regional issues, particularly when these require intervening in domestic political affairs and preventing internal crisis. Important exceptions to that rule, however, were the post-conflict UN Missions for monitoring and verification of the peace agreements in Guatemala and El Salvador in the 1990s. Nevertheless, strong criticisms are made regarding the “functional use” of the UN and, especially, of the Security Council, by the most powerful member states, in addressing and defining unilaterally different issues that affect the Global South⁵¹.

However, also excepted from this implicit rule are several UN agencies that deal with specific topics, including the UNPD programs, even if those also address issues such as democratic governance and the strengthening of institutions, and the International Court of Justice, which sometimes serves to bypass the OAS mechanisms, particularly with regard to issues related to border disputes and problems⁵².

In sum, besides the clear division of tasks and responsibilities regarding the capacity and the use of force to prevent or solve armed or violent conflicts, and the delegation by the UN of most of the conflict prevention tasks on a regional level to the OAS in recent years, there is a growing

operational collaboration between the two organizations, particularly with some special agencies of the UN, blurring the limits of the respective functions and commitments. In the framework of this collaboration, however, there does not seem to be too much “contamination” of the currently widely promoted concept of conflict prevention by the UN to the OAS, where there is a clear preference to address conflict issues in terms of crisis management or, at best, peace-building⁵³. Finally, formal and integrated mechanisms and criteria for cooperation between the two organizations are still to be developed, while ad hoc procedures still tend to prevail.

The OAS and Civil Society: Conflict Prevention and the Search of New Forms of Collaboration

On an operational level, since 2001, the current cooperation between the OAS and the UN programs covers a wide range of issues.

Civil society plays a vital role in building a culture of prevention and ensuring durable peace. However, civil society has only recently begun to develop in Latin America and the Caribbean as a critical stakeholder for the design and implementation of different local, national or international policies and has a short history⁵⁴. Moreover, historically, in the region, national governments see civil society as “a nebulous conglomeration”⁵⁵ with which they are reluctant to engage. Consequently, civil society organizations (CSO) concerns often go ignored or neglected, notwithstanding how paramount their contribution may be. Furthermore, both in terms of operational conflict prevention, through the promotion of citizen diplomacy, dialogue and early warning capacity, or of structural prevention associated to the implementation of strategies of social, economic and political change, civil society can become a crucial interlocutor and stakeholder and a distinctive actor. In recent years, and particularly after the end of the Cold War, the UN, through its agencies and programs, has become increasingly aware of the need to engage civil society organizations, at the local, national and international levels, in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and the promotion of a culture of peace and prevention⁵⁶.

Nevertheless, civil society participation is less acknowledged in Latin America and the Carib-

bean, especially when dealing with regional issues. Most of the regional and subregional organizations pays lip service to the involvement of CSO and social movements, but have yet failed to develop adequate mechanisms and normative frameworks for its participation and empowerment⁵⁷.

However, regarding conflict prevention and peacebuilding, despite the debate that was initiated on broader security notions which transcend the specific domains of national defense and military, state-centric approaches continue to prevail. Within this context, contrary to conventional rhetoric, there is still a lack or a severe limitation of established mechanisms for civil society participation in peace and security issues, both at the national and at the regional level. For CSOs to participate in these issues and, particularly, in conflict prevention and resolution they are still to overcome a set of major challenges. The spaces and mechanisms created to facilitate CSO inclusion are, more often than not, ad hoc in nature and are not the result of formally established procedures. As a consequence, CSOs participation is limited to that of observers, consultants and recipients of capacity-building programs and CSOs have serious difficulties in engaging in a substantial process of designing, negotiating and implementing conflict prevention and peacebuilding policies on their own or in collaboration with governmental or regional initiatives⁵⁸.

Within this framework, over the past years, the bodies, agencies and programs of the OAS have developed distinctive relationships with national and international CSOs. Nevertheless, it was not until the mid-1990s, under the process of consolidation of democracy in the hemisphere, that different member States and CSOs started advocating for the creation of an effective and institutionalized space for civil society participation in OAS activities. As a result, during the last two decades, the OAS has officially recognized the need of fostering partnerships with CSOs in order to respond to the multiple political, economic and social challenges facing the region.

Civil society participation at the OAS is channeled through different activities of the organization, mostly in terms of dialogues, fora and interaction sessions. The main spaces for civil society participation are the Dialogues with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs usually held previously to the

General Assemblies, the Civil Society Fora and dialogues at the Summits of the Americas, the attendance to the Inter-American Council of Integral Development (CIDI) meetings, and the participation in other specific conferences of the OAS upon request approved by the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation (CISC), after an examination of the credentials of the CSO and their bearing on the agenda of the conference⁵⁹.

Strong impulse for the acknowledgment and participation of civil society organizations was associated with the Americas Summits since the beginning. After the Quebec City Summit of the Americas, civil society participation was increasingly encouraged, as a key element of the process of strengthening democracy in the region, both at the Summits and at the General Assemblies⁶⁰. Particularly, the OAS Group for follow-up of the Summits (GRIC) was a key champion for civil society participation in the OAS. Currently, the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation (CISC) in OAS Activities is a multilateral Summit follow-up mechanism that operates within the political structure of the organization and manages civil society participation. The CISC reports to the OAS General Assembly through the Permanent Council.

It is important to note that among the OAS fields of activity mentioned in the Manual for Civil Society Participation in the OAS and in the Summits of the Americas, there is no reference to matters specifically related to peace and regional security, or to conflict prevention⁶¹. Currently, 245 civil society organizations are registered with the OAS, having fulfilled the needed requisites⁶². However, only 12 of them are listed as related to peace and security building⁶³.

Since 1999, one of the most active CSO on issues of civil society participation and conflict prevention and peacebuilding at the OAS is the Regional Coordination of Social and Economic Research (CRIES)⁶⁴, currently responsible for the Secretariat of a broader CSO network – the Latin American and Caribbean Platform for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding (PLACPAZ). In collaboration with other CSOs, CRIES has been consistently involved in OAS consultations for the preparation of recommendations for Summits and the OAS General Assemblies, and in the follow-up process

to these recommendations. This work was mostly coordinated with the OAS through the GRIC, and -currently- through the SICS. Also, since 2002, CRIES has been addressing at the OAS the issues of conflict prevention, regional security and peace building. Even if the process of CRIES and CSOs participation in the OAS is still recent and is mostly related to the Summits of the Americas and the OAS General Assembly, the results, in terms of mainstreaming conflict prevention, are mixed.

During the Conference on Hemispheric Security held in México in 2003, CRIES and other CSOs achieved, some significant results -however modest. According to the final document approved by the official representatives attending the Conference, civil society organizations were for the first time recognized as important actors and interlocutors in conflict prevention.

Notwithstanding the fact that CRIES, and lately PLACPAZ, have been working to get the issues related to regional peace and security and, particularly, conflict prevention on the Mar del Plata Summit agenda for the two previous years, their proposals were never considered for the dialogue agenda in Mar del Plata⁶⁵. Consequently, after this Summit, there is a perception that CSO participation has been “ghettoized” and that their participation is more passive than active. Within this context, there is a clear feeling of frustration and disappointment among civil society organizations with regards to mainstreaming distinctive issues and developing joint initiatives with the OAS, particularly with regards to conflict prevention and peace-building issues.

A review of civil society recommendations to the OAS, both in terms of hemispheric security and of civil society participation, evidences a decreasing interest to present proposals and recommendations at the open fora and dialogues with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs attending the Summits or OAS General Assemblies. The need to develop joint operationally conflict prevention measures as part of the hemispheric security initiatives through a liaison office at the OAS and, particularly, with the Committee for Hemispheric Security, are insistently proposed by CSOs and go consistently unattended by member States⁶⁶. The most recent documents of the OAS reflecting

consultations with civil society contain no reference to this issue, with the exception of a general reference to fostering “a culture of peace”⁶⁷. Oddly enough, the documents presented to the meeting on Preparation by Member States to Commemorate the Fifth Anniversary of the Declaration on Security in the Americas, the reports presented by the OAS Secretariat for Political Affairs, and the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security contained no mention to conflict prevention or civil society participation in regional peace and security issues⁶⁸.

The exception during this preparation meeting was the report presented by the Summits of the Americas Secretariat, stating, among other issues, that “On the civil recommendations compiled to date, nearly sixty (60) refer specifically to hemispheric security, while hundreds more suggestions to the governments of the region regarding

matters that comprise the concept of multidimensional security set forth in the declaration on Security in the Americas”⁶⁹. The report, however, fails to account for the receptivity with which those recommendations were received by the governments, and the follow-up given to them.

On an operational level, links have been established with the office of the OAS Assistant Secretary General to develop a program of dialogues between CSOs and regional and subregional organizations. The attempts to develop a more consistent and formal collaboration on conflict prevention and peace-building with the Secretariat for Political Affairs, however, were not up for a good start after the currently appointed Under Secretary argued that, “in a democratic system, the only civil society that is legitimate is the one represented by political parties”. However, the process coordinated by the UNDP, the Carter Center and the OAS in 2002 in Venezuela involving civil society participation in fostering political dialogue, or the more recent effort to promote public opinion support to overcome the Colombia/Ecuador conflict coordinated by the UN, the OAS and the Carter Center, are a clear sign of the relevance of civil society involvement.

Although civil society contributions in shaping OAS policies related to security, conflict preven-

In collaboration with other CSOs CRIES has been consistently involved in OAS consultations for the preparation of recommendations for Summits and the OAS General Assemblies.

tion and peacebuilding are becoming increasingly important led by a significant growth in the CSOs capacity to contribute, both conceptually and operationally, to conflict prevention, peace-building and early warning, the mechanisms to channel civil society participation in OAS activities are still predominantly informal and ad hoc, when existing at all. Civil society recommendations at the Summits and OAS General Assemblies are compiled and acknowledged, but seldom become operational, as there are no monitoring procedures to follow up most of the recommendations of the final declarations of these gatherings. Moreover, although it has not gone unnoticed that there has been an increase in civil society's capacity to contribute on a operational level and this contribution has been eventually accepted by several OAS field programs and missions (such as MPPA), there are no institutionalized mechanisms to capitalize these experiences and the resulting expertise. Additionally, there is virtually no articulation between the different initiatives and contributions of local civil society organizations and the broader advocacy work carried out by regional CSO networks at the OAS meetings, regarding specific recommendations for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Although the OAS is a complex organization, with different layers of engagement with civil society, the mainstreaming of conflict prevention by committed CSO is extremely slow and sporadic, both because of the reluctance of the member states to accept the notion and of the reticence to acknowledge and institutionalize the collaboration and the role of CSOs at different levels. Furthermore, CSOs engagement is often restricted to observation, consultation and participation in capacity-building programs⁷⁰.

In this regard, the good will and commitment expressed repeatedly by the SG and the ASG regarding the need of an increasing civil society involvement in the activities of the OAS, is blocked, more often than not, by the lack of political will of several member States, the reluctance of some members of its staff and the absence of clear criteria and mechanisms for substantial involvement in the OAS agenda and programs.

Conflict Prevention and the OAS

Although most analysts agree on the fact that the OAS has an installed capacity for regional conflict prevention, particularly regarding the

areas that ASG Ramdin calls “the three pillars for peacebuilding” – peaceful settlement of interstate disputes and the multidimensional concept of security associated with a new hemispheric agenda; the protection of human rights, and the defense and promotion of democracy and strengthening of representative institutions⁷¹ -, and that there are de facto initiatives and actions in process to deal with conflicts and crisis in all three areas, the general trend is more reactive than preventive. While there is no explicit mandate for conflict prevention in the OAS, there are normative instruments and institutional mechanisms providing strong support to this function. To date, this shortcoming has not impeded OAS involvement in conflict prevention activities.

Several factors contribute to creating and sustaining this situation, notwithstanding the current efforts by the SG and the ASG of the OAS to advance significant changes in this regard.

First of all, there is a conceptual reluctance to accept the notion of conflict prevention, and a preference to use peacebuilding, crisis management or conflict management, and conflict resolution approaches rather than measures that can be identified as “conflict prevention” as such. This reluctance is associated with the historic sensitivities on the part of most member states regarding any potential external interference with their internal affairs. Therefore, any initiative by the OAS that might anticipate the irruption or escalation of a crisis into violent or armed conflict, particularly in the domestic sphere, requires the invitation to intervene by a member state and/or a consensual decision by the Permanent Council, the Meetings of Consultation of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, or the OAS General Assembly⁷². Although these sensitivities might be on their way to disappearance, particularly under the pressure of new modalities of threats and conflicts on a global and regional scale, and the influence of the changing agenda of the UN⁷³, there is still a clearly reactive attitude, as seen in the case of the recent conflict between Colombia and Ecuador.

Notwithstanding the strongly embedded juridical and “legalistic” traditions in the Inter-American system (an important tool to prevent any illegitimate use of force by powerful regional neighbors through diplomacy and international law) and the existence of specific established legal mechanisms

to address interstate or intrastate crisis situations in the region, such as the OAS Charter or the IADC, there is a lack of an explicit mandate for conflict prevention, and a limited number of established legal and procedural criteria that could allow a more proactive action in this field. As a result, there is a persistence of ad hoc responses, mostly channeled through the SG “good offices” or his representatives, once consensus is reached and, more often than not, once the crisis has erupted. The current system encourages a reactive response, rather than the fostering of initiatives and policies towards preventive action, and lacks a preventive framework for addressing the early stages of a conflict.

Similarly, on the conceptual and legal level, there is an evident tension between the principle of “non-intervention” and an authoritative interpretation of the Democratic Charter, as there are no established criteria about democratic standards.

Within this context, the persistence and prevalence of a culture of reaction, rather a culture of prevention, is evident in terms of the general conceptual, juridical and political framework of the OAS. Consequently, although there are programs and initiatives clearly associated with anticipating crisis, there is neither a systemic approach to conflict prevention, nor a strategy for coordination with different actors, with the exception of the OAS member states. Coordination with the UN and its agencies has been developing at its own pace since 2001, mostly associated with the good will and disposition of the OAS SG, rather than through a consistent long-term strategy with a set of distinctive criteria. Collaboration with civil society organizations is also subjected to the good intentions of the leadership of the OAS, lacks coordination between different levels of civil society organizations actions and engagement, and, more often than not, is expressed through paying lip service to the need of encouraging “civil society participation”, without monitoring or following up on the recommendations made by civil society organizations; a conspicuous absence of a institutionalized mechanism for a more effective civil society involvement and information, and an ad hoc approach to civil society commitments and involvement on the community and grass-roots level by OAS func-

The current system encourages a reactive response, rather than the fostering of initiatives and policies towards preventive action, and lacks a preventive framework for addressing the early stages of a conflict.

tionaries. As noted by Dress, “in all aspects of early warning, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, local expertise in planning, participation and implementation is paramount”⁷⁴. However, this is not the case at the OAS. Furthermore, there is the emergence of other regional and subregional organizations that might develop similar capacities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding on a regional or subregional level, as shown by the recent intervention of UNASUR in the Bolivian crisis, which can compete or supplement the initiatives and actions of the OAS in this field. Even if some of these organizations are considered part of the Inter-American system, not all of them agree on the criteria for building peace in the region. In this regard, a consistent multi-stakeholder approach and strategy at the OAS are still lacking, but urgently needed, especially when resources and capacities of different stakeholders, including other regional and subregional organizations and private sector, are neglected or ignored.

Although several analysts point out to the established operational conflict prevention capacity of the OAS structures and mechanisms, notwithstanding a lack of a systemic and consistent approach, this capacity, again, is often the result of ad hoc actions and initiatives. The existing structure and mechanisms are mostly oriented towards strengthening the capacity of the SG and ASG to initiate preventive diplomacy actions, particularly through “good offices”, and most of the new secretariats perform a supporting role. Nevertheless, at the secretariats and despite the limited resources, there is a significant installed analytical capacity. However, this capacity is not potentiated through systematic links with academia and think tanks, which creates severe restrictions when considering the broad scope of issues and mandates dealt with by the OAS. In the absence of a developed (and extremely expensive) EWER regional system⁷⁵, this capacity is paramount to address early warning at different levels. Again, a multi-stakeholder strategy can enrich and significantly broaden the OAS analytical capability through operational cooperation and alliances with the UN agencies, other regional organizations, civil society organizations and networks, the academia and think tanks, the private sector and the media, beyond their eventual attendance to OAS meetings as observers. Moreover, a multi and inter-disciplinary

approach and strategy are crucial for integrating different mechanisms and disciplinary fields, such as conflict prevention and peacebuilding, regional security, human rights, development economics and democratic governance.

While early warning capacity and data gathering is omnipresent through all the OAS main mechanisms, as noted by many analysts⁷⁶, early response nurtured by this capacity is not, mostly because of the lack of political will and the political constraints imposed by member states, as mentioned above. Decisions to take action in reaction to the early warning signs are generally slowed down both by the lack of established criteria and timelines, and by the need to reach a consensus among the member states. Additionally, as there is no structured process and criteria for addressing an emerging crisis, there is much room for interpretation by the elected officials and the Permanent Council as to what cases are more relevant, urgent or high-profile, and should be imperatively addressed by the organization.

Expanding analytical capacity can also contribute to make up for the absence of a formal structural prevention strategy of conflict prevention at the OAS. Although both the SG and ASG emphasize the need to link democracy and regional security issues with social and economic development, a systemic, long-term and integrated approach to address this issue is currently absent, both because democratic governance and hemispheric peace and security are at the forefront of the current OAS agenda, and on account of the restricted availability of financial resources for the development of a sustained strategy⁷⁷.

As it can be seen, multiple layers and linkages have to be considered when dealing with conflict prevention in a regional organization such as the OAS. Although there is an evident reluctance and a set of inter-linked problems for addressing conflict prevention as such, there also seems to exist an established infra-structure and mechanisms for deepening the development of a more systematic, coordinated and long-term strategy to anticipate and prevent the emergence of violent conflict in the region, a capital of accumulated experiences and lessons learnt in preventing crisis, and a distinct commitment to foster democratic dialogue and governance, peaceful settlement of disputes and a complex regional security archi-

ture. The movement in this direction is slow and full of roadblocks, particularly of political and conceptual nature, more than technical and operational. Moreover, the current elected officials are committed to this movement, even if they perceive it as a gradual and low-profile process of developing a peacebuilding framework and infrastructure which does not dare to mention conflict prevention as such, within a larger process of slowly moving from ad hoc approaches to more institutionalized mechanisms and criteria⁷⁸. However, the progressive building and mainstreaming of this process is decisively associated with the political will and commitment of its member states in a changing regional and global environment of domestic pressures, regional tensions and significant social and political transformations. Ultimately, the “owners” of the organization are its member states, with their asymmetries and often diverging interests. The ability to persuade them and reach the necessary consensus is the challenge that the current OAS elected officials are facing, in order to foster a substantial change in dealing with conflict prevention or, as the current organizational conventional wisdom rules, with peacebuilding in the region.

Notes

1. Serbin 2003b; 2005; Serbin and Ugarte 2007.
2. PNUD 2005:162.
3. Daly Hayes 2007:3.
4. Nevertheless, despite the advantages of regional organisations as hosts for conflict preventive measures, there are also some negative aspects in resorting to the regional framework. Frequently, the implementation of conflict prevention measures by regional organizations is stalled by the lack of capacity and political will, scarcity of resources, fear of giving up sovereignty and historical animosity among its member states, becoming all this traits potential roadblocks on the way of more effective regional security governance.
5. Jácome 2004; Bourse 2008.
6. UNASUR, according to its Spanish acronym, which includes as member states all South American countries and excludes Central and North America.

7. See Gratius 2008.
8. The OAS currently includes 35 member states.
9. Cuba was expelled from the OAS in 1962, as a result of the pressures of the US and its identification with communism. Nevertheless, within this context, in 1965, the OAS was involved in the Dominican Republic crisis, approving the creation of an Inter-American force which intervened militarily in the country.
10. Baranyi 2005:4.
11. Levitt 2006:1.
12. Milet 2008:157.
13. Kreimer 2003:254.
14. Sotomayor 2008:44-45.
15. See articles 84-89 and 110-111 of the OAS Charter.
16. Pope Atkins 1989: 232.
17. See <http://www.corteidh.or.cr>
18. Grossman 2001.
19. Vaky 1993: 10.
20. Jelin and Hersberg 1996; Cleary 2007.
21. *Declaration on the Security in the Americas*, Section II. Par. 4., Organization of American States, Special Conference on Security, México, 2003.
22. Section II, point p, of the *Declaration* states “Conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes between states are essential to the stability and security of the hemisphere”, while Section III, point 33, establishes that “We agree, in the context of our commitment to a democratic culture, to strengthen civil society participation in considering, developing, and implementing multidimensional approaches to security”. However, civil society organizations proposition of creating an institutional liaison among the OAS and civil society organizations to address conflict prevention issues, was not included.
23. Baranyi 2005:5.
24. Chillier and Freeman 2005: 1.
25. Baranyi 2005:5.
26. See Sixth Conference of Ministers of Defense of the Americas: Declaration of Quito, November 21, 2004, US Dpt. Of State, <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/71006.htm>
27. Conferences of Ministers of Defense of the Americas trace their origins to the Summit of the Americas, initiated during the First Summit of the Americas, held in Miami in 1994. Several civil society organizations and networks attend regularly the Conferences as observers, including the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), and the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO).
28. *OAS Charter 1948, Arts. 2, 3, old 9.*
29. *AG/RES. 1080 (XXI-0/91)*
30. As it happen with the role of MERCOSUR during the Paraguay crisis.
31. Soto 2004:205.
32. See Inter-American Democratic Charter, http://www.oas.org/OASpage/eng/Documents/Democratic_Charter.htm
33. Jimenez 2002.
34. Milet 2004: 151.
35. Soto 2004:225.
36. *OAS: Strategic Plan 2005, internal document.*
37. *CP/RES. 859 (1397/04)*
38. *RC.25/RES.1/08 rev. 1*
39. *OEA/Ser.F/II.25 RC.25/doc. 15/08, June 3 2008*
40. Rodrigues 2008:164.
41. The OAS is mostly a member-funded organization. Contributions by the member states are based on a “capacity to pay” quota system similar to that of the United Nations and determined by the Gross National Product (GNP) of the member state. The US is by far the largest contributor, paying 59,47% of the total budget. Canadá contributes the second largest amount at 13,761%, Brazil pays 7,626%, México pays 6,62%, Venezuela 2,292% and Argentina 2, 82%. All other member states contributes to less than 1 % of the total budget. Additionally to the established quotas, the member states can voluntarily contribute to specific projects through

- non-suscription contributions, mostly provided by the richest countries. Consequently, the agenda of the OAS is often heavily influenced by the North American states and the states with the largest economies in South America. Moreover, permanent observer status at the OAS has been granted to 59 states and the European Union. Of this number, approximately 20 contribute to the organization programs on a regular basis and eight contribute sporadically. The areas that most benefited in-kind in 2006 were the Department of Political Affairs (61%), the Department of Multidimensional Security (23%), and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (10%), which shows the particular interest of donors for political stability, the rule of law and regional security. However, the overall programmatic budget has decreased slightly over the last decade, while the number of mandates is on increase. Consequently, there is a growing lack of financial resources, taking into account that many of the member countries are well behind schedule in the payment of their quotas, which seriously affect the implementation of the programs. See Graham 2004 and 2005.
42. Quoted by Vaky 1993: 45, from Secretary General Joao Baena Soares, "Cooperation between the Organization of American States and the United Nations System", Part 1, Annex 2, pp. 17-19.
 43. *Charter of the United Nations, Chapter VIII*, <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/chapter8.htm>
 44. *Declaration on Security of the Americas*, section II, point z
 45. Nevertheless, it is important to note that particularly in the Caribbean Basin countries, there is a precedent of UN presence in conflict resolution and peacebuilding through different programs and verification and observation missions, such as in Nicaragua and El Salvador in the mid-1990s, and in Guatemala since the mid-1990s to 2005; UN assistance through different programs and agencies in Colombia since 1996, and UN Facilitation in Dialogue between Venezuela and Guyana in 1990 (Jácome, Milet and Serbin 2005: 7-8).
 46. Menjívar 2006: 194.
 47. International Crisis Group: *Haiti: Conflict History*, <http://www.crisisgroup.org>
 48. Ramírez 2004: 115.
 49. Sriram 2002:5.
 50. See as an example of this collaboration the recent publication of Pruitt, Bettye and Philip Thomas (2007) *Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners*, Washington D.C – Stockholm – New York: General Secretariat of the OAS/International IDEA/UNDP.
 51. Ramírez 2004: 107-109.
 52. Sotomayor Velázquez 2008.
 53. As stated by current OAS ASG Ambassador Albert Ramdin "...I do not like the term "conflict prevention", I prefer to speak about "peacebuilding", not only because it seems to reflect a more positive and constructive approach, but because it also refers to a more continuous process and set of activities", Remarks by Amb. A. Ramdin, CARI, Buenos Aires, 3 April 2008.
 54. Serbin 2007b; Serbin and Fioramonti 2007.
 55. Touré 2003:16.
 56. Serbin and Ugarte 2007; Bourse 2008.
 57. Serbin 2007c.
 58. Jácome, Milet and Serbin 2005: 2-3.
 59. See CP/RES. 759 (1217/99), 15 December 199, "Guidelines for the Participation of Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities", and CP/RES. 840 (1361/03), 26 March 2003, "Strategies for increasing and strengthening participation by civil society organizations in OAS activities". See also *Manual for Civil Society Participation in the Organization of Americas States and in the Summits of the Americas Process*, Washington D.C.: Summits of the Americas Secretariat, 2006.
 60. Most of the issues addressed by civil society organizations at the OAS are related to human and civil rights, justice and law. More recently, democratic governance, government transparency and corruption also became relevant issues on the civil society organizations (CSOs) agenda. Nevertheless, recent presentations at the OAS by civil society networks and organizations are increasingly addressing also issues of equitable and sustainable development, environmental problems and fair trade, particularly at the CIDI meetings.

61. *Manual for Civil Society Participation in the Organization of Americas States and in the Summits of the Americas Process*, Washington, DC: Summits of the Americas Secretariat, p. 6.
62. http://www.civil-society.oas.org/Pages/Registry_ENG.htm
63. With one exception, the majority of them are based in the United States. http://www.civil-society.oas.org/Pages/LINKS_CSO_ENG.htm
64. CRIES is a Latin American and Caribbean network of NGOs, research centers and professional associations founded in 1982. Its mandate aims at promoting civil society participation in the regional and sub-regional integration processes; increasing civil society advocacy and influence in the formulation and implementation of regional public policies, and strengthening and deepening democratic governance, fostering sustainable and equitable development and building regional peace. See www.cries.org
65. In contrast with other Summits and OAS meetings, the host government decided on the three topics of the agenda without considering previous consultations with civil society organizations and networks. See Interview with Janie Hulse from Global Envision, <http://www.globalenvision.org>
66. See *2002-2006 Civil Society Recommendations. Compilation of civil society recommendations presented to the Organization of American States and the Summit of the Americas Process on issues pertaining to the Inter-American Agenda*, Washington, D.C.: Summits of the Americas Secretariat, 2006, particularly pages 26, 34, 43-44, 50, 59-60, 66, 72, and 78, related to recommendations on hemispheric security and civil society participation, <http://www.civil-society.oas.org>
67. See CP/CISC-325-07, 21 May 2007, "Civil society recommendations from the roundtable with civil society on the hemispheric agenda", held in Washington on May 10-11, 2007, and *Civil Society Hemispheric Forum "Securing our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability"*, Washington D.C.; Summits of the Americas Secretariat, May 2008, p. 8, <http://www.civil-society.oas.org>
68. CP/CSH-943/08 cor. 1, 22 February 2008, "Report on Measures and Actions related to the Implementation of the declaration on Security in the Americas", OAS Secretariat for Political, and CP/CSH-946/08 corr.2, 22 February 2008, "Report on Measures and Actions related to the Implementation of the declaration on Security in the Americas", presented by the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security, <http://www.oas.org/csh/english/>
69. See CP/CSH-952/08, 11 February 2008, "Report on Measures and Actions related to the Implementation of the declaration on Security in the Americas", presented by the Summits of the Americas Secretariat, <http://www.oas.org/csh/english/>
70. An interesting example in this regard is the case of the OAS/PROPAZ program until 2003, a joint effort with the Guatemalan government, a group of international donors, various civil society organizations and sectors, and the OAS to promote the transformation of conflict in Guatemala through the use of dialogue as a mechanism for addressing the deep-rooted causes of conflict in this country.
71. Ramdin 2008.
72. However, "The OAS's strength is in promoting consensus among State members, but is not nearly so effective at developing actionable agendas. Its forte is consensus declarations that express the community spirit of the subject at hand" (Daly Hayes 2007: 5 and 7).
73. As the debate about the Responsibility to Protect shows, a statement that has been endorsed by several Latin American and Caribbean countries
74. Dress 2005:7.
75. Matveeva 2006.
76. According to Chetan Kumar, early warning never had been a problem for the region, the difficulty being the implementation of a preventive response, in CRIES "La prevención de conflictos en las Américas: roles y alianzas de la ONU, la OEA y la sociedad civil". *Informe del panel interactivo de discusión que se desarrolló durante la conferencia global en las Naciones Unidas "From Reaction to Prevention: Civil Society Forging Partnerships to Prevent Violent Conflict and Build Peace"*, 19 to 21 July 2005,

see <http://www.global.net/iepala/global/fichas>

77. As Mark Shneider emphasizes “The OAS simply needs to build up a better crisis response capacity (...) While a military peacekeeping response capability for the OAS is unlikely in the near future (...) an expanded civilian crisis response capacity is definitely possible and should be politically acceptable” (Schneider 2006).
78. *Interview with Amb. Albert Ramdin, Washington D.C., August 2008.*

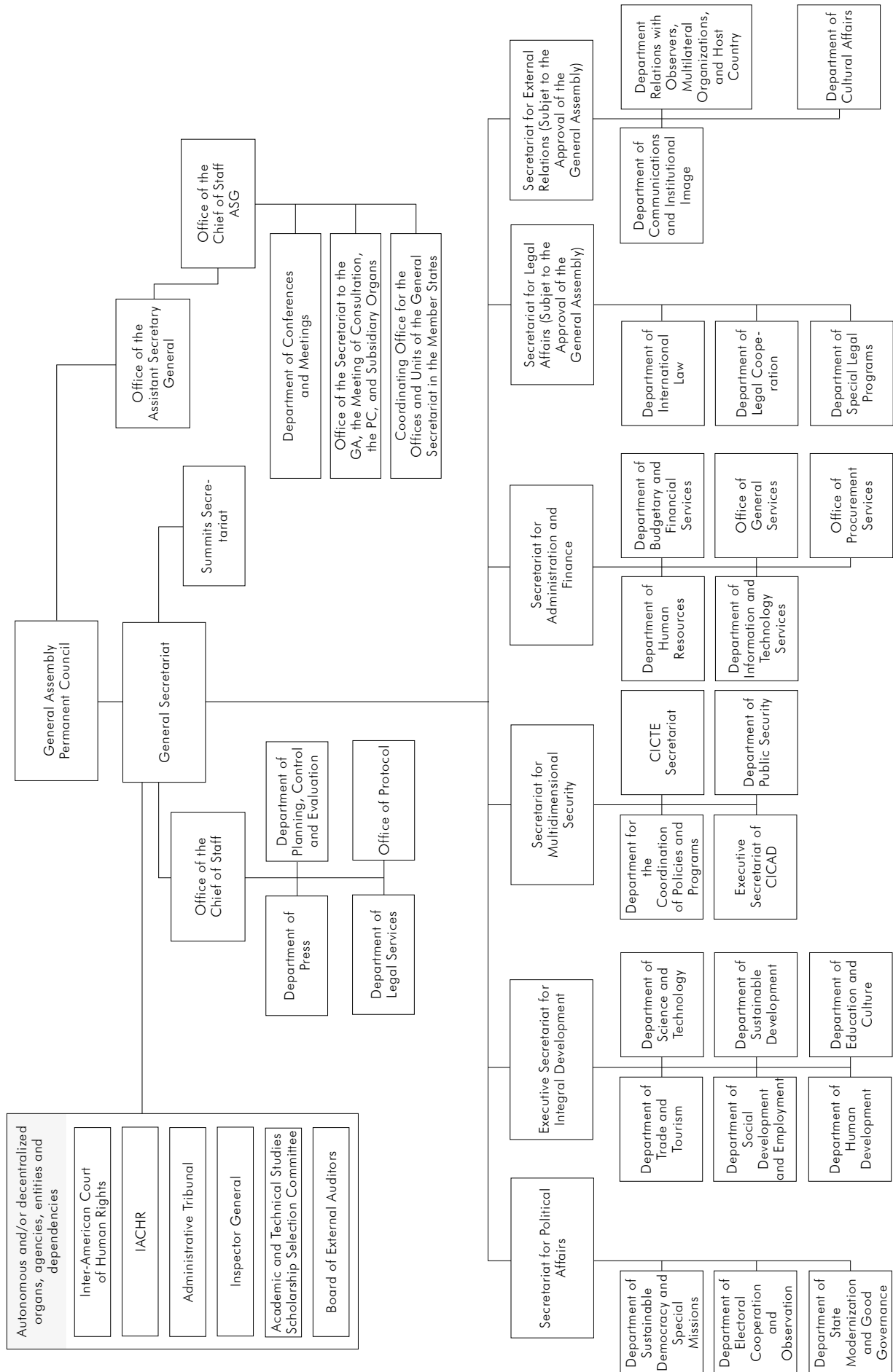
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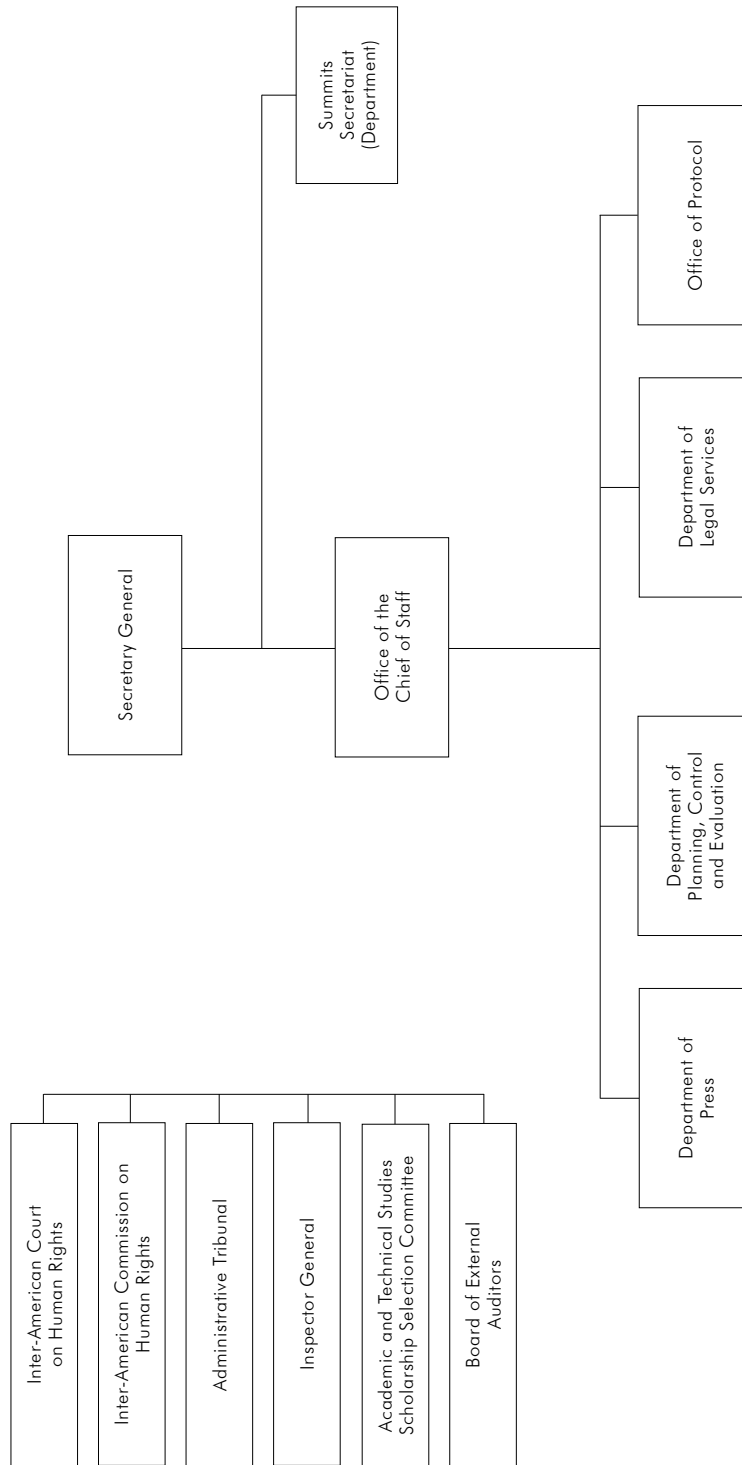
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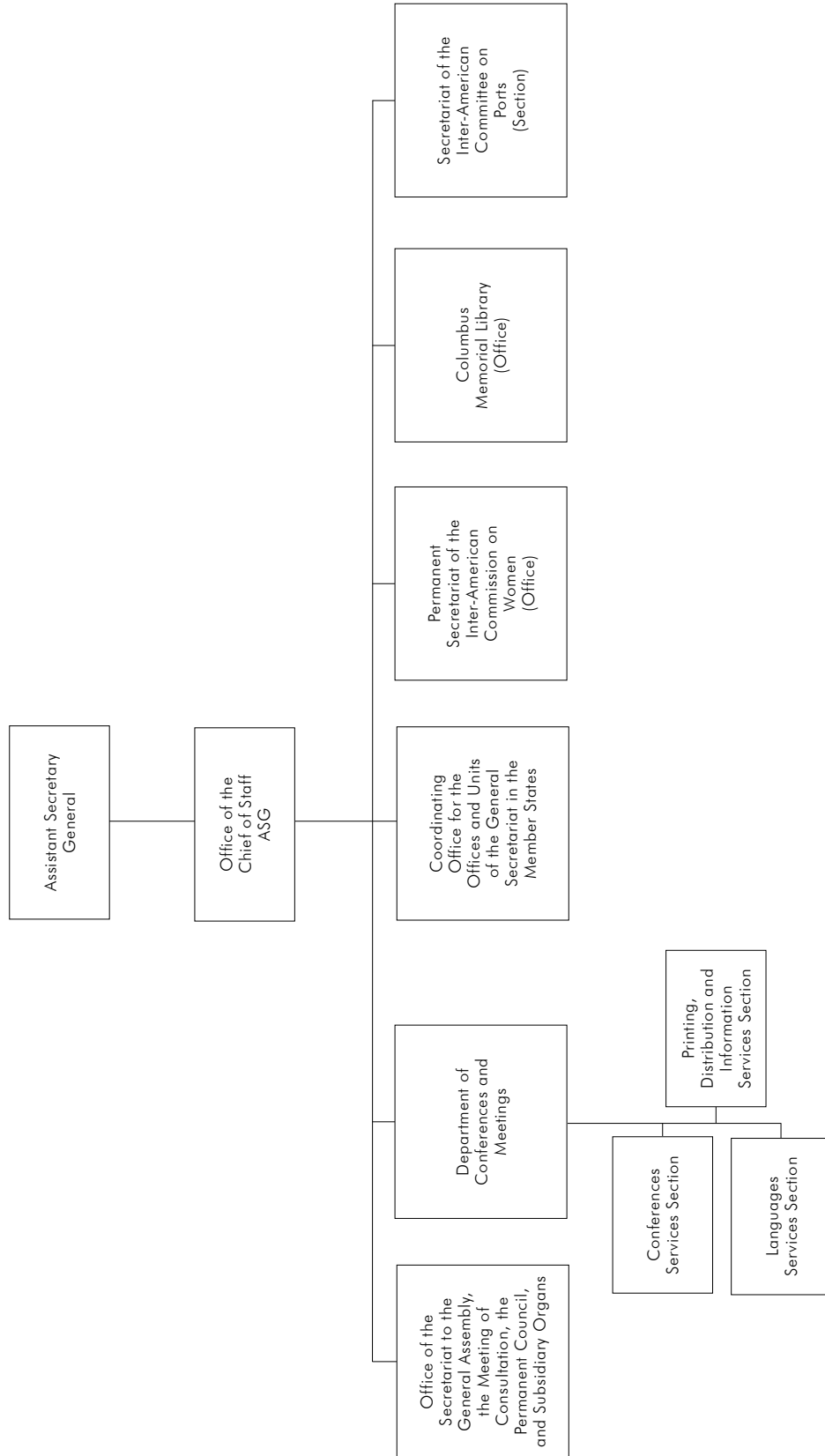
Annex I



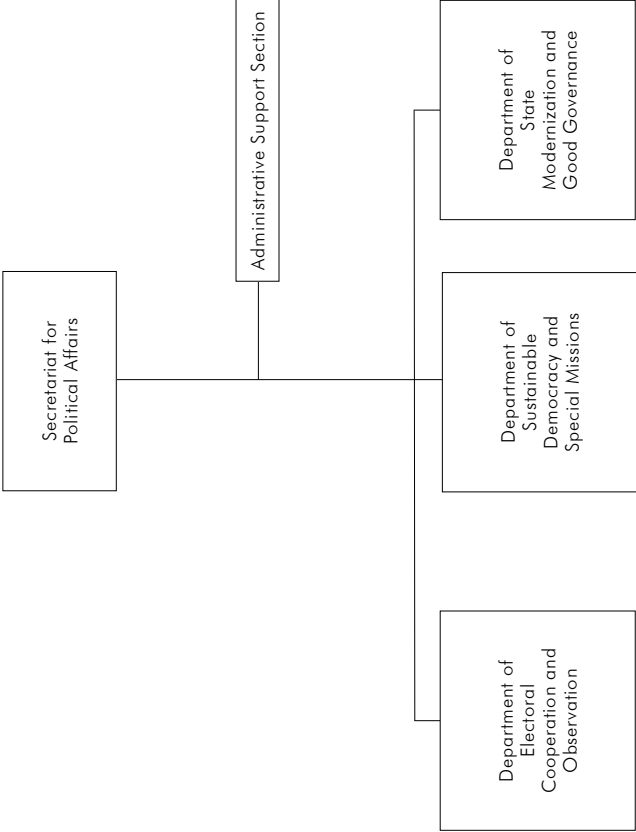
Organizational Structure
Office of the Secretary General



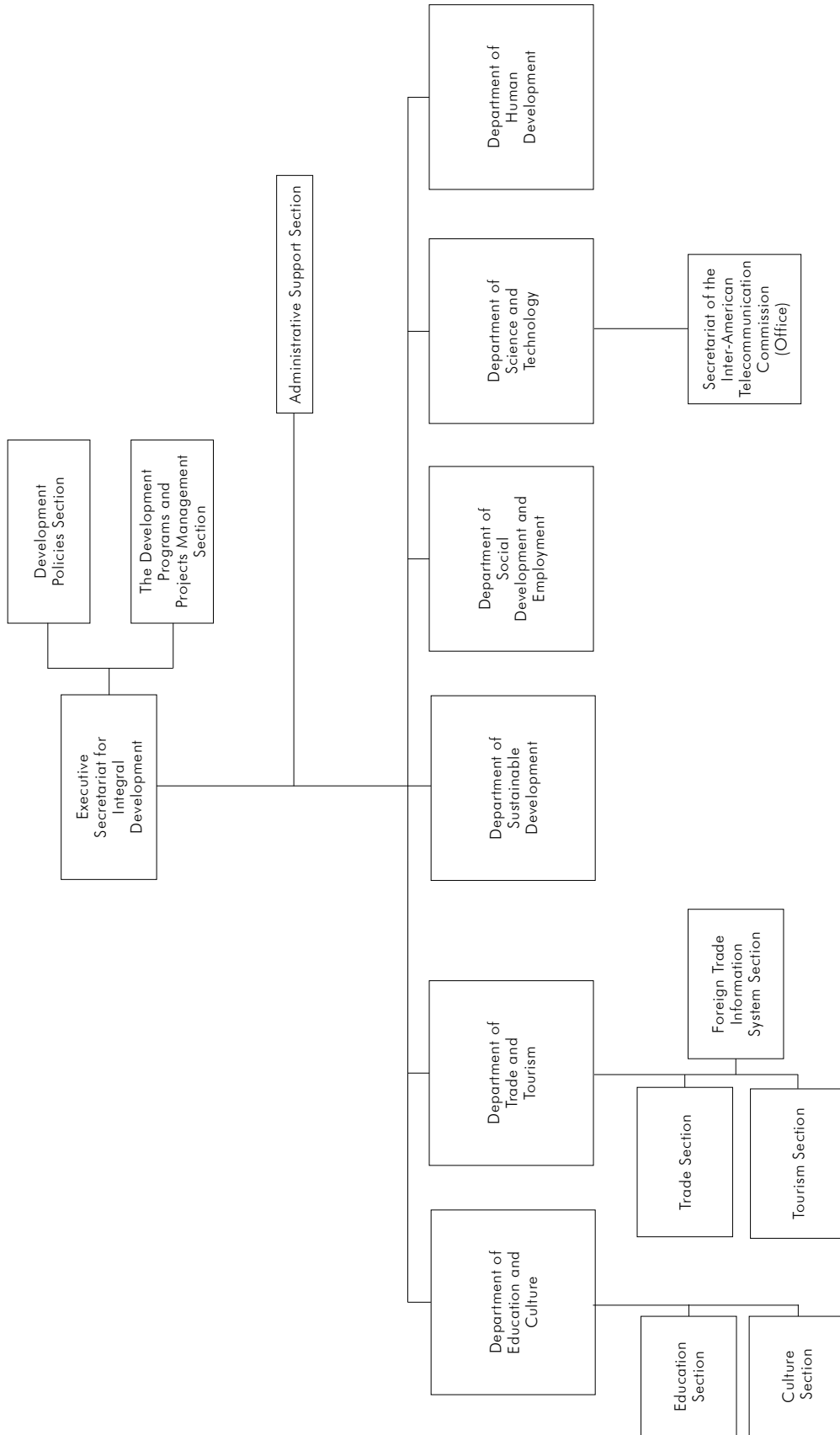
**Organizational Structure
Office of the Assistance Secretary General**



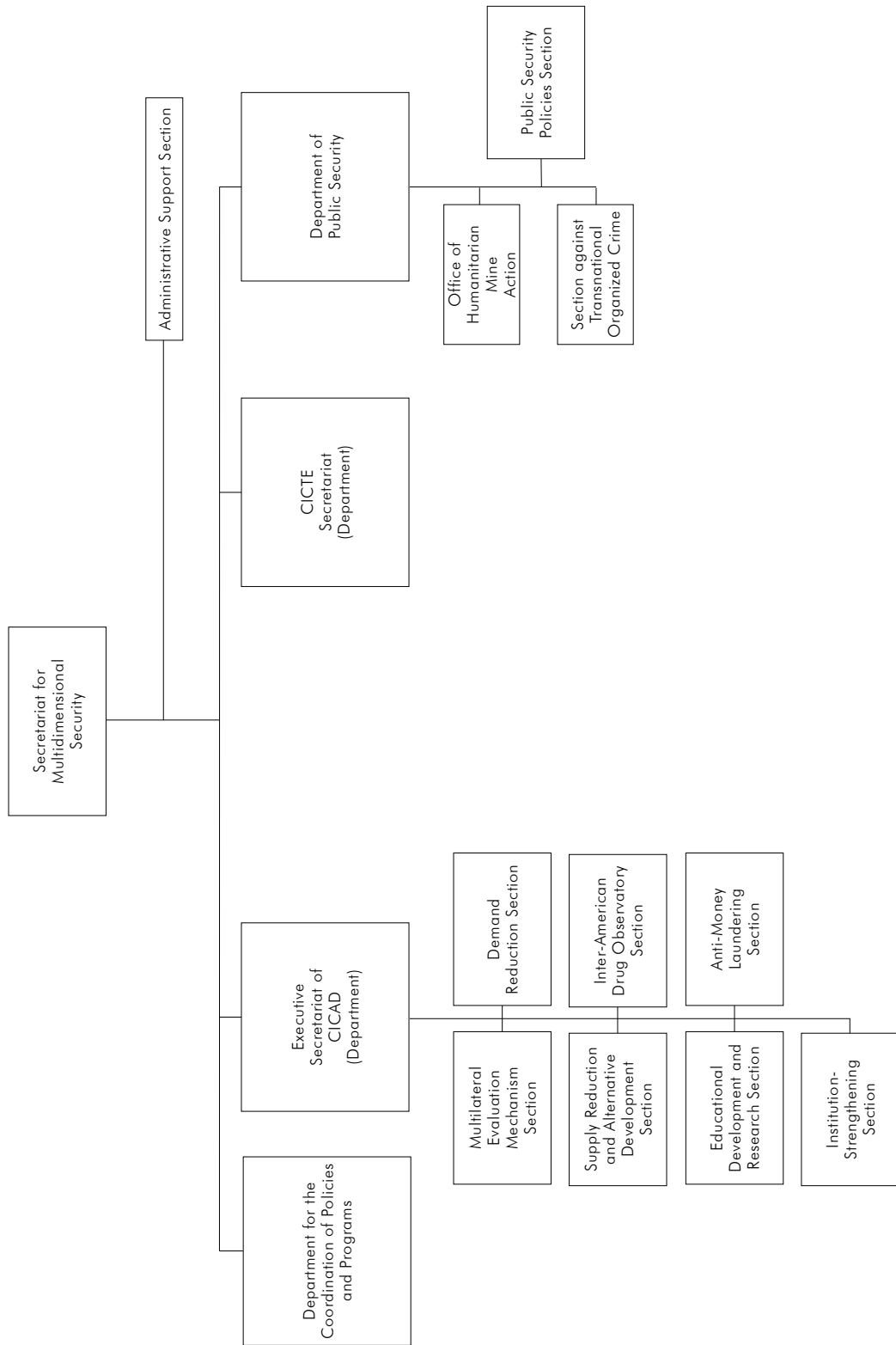
**Organizational Structure
Secretariat for Political Affairs**



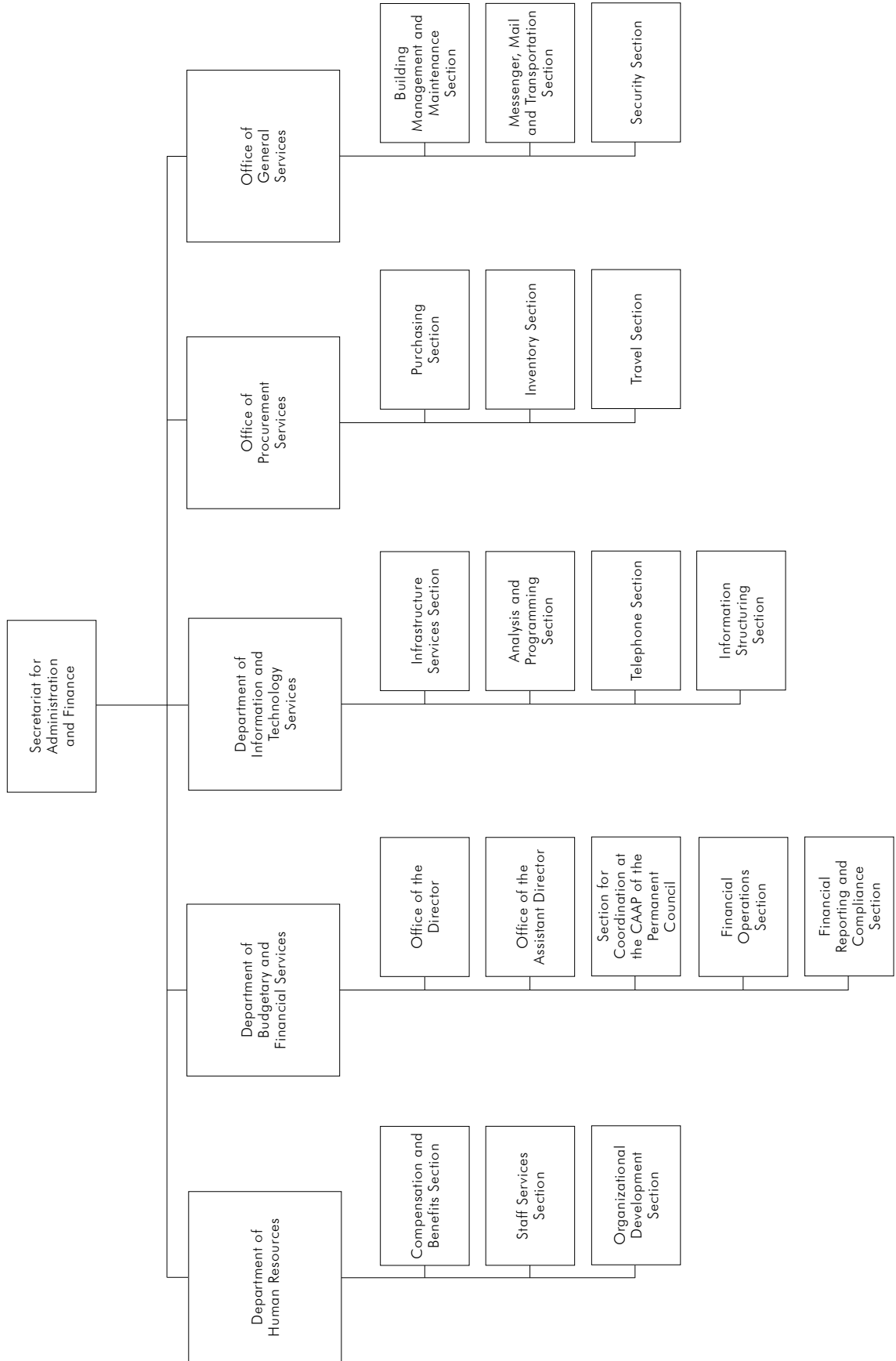
**Organizational Structure
Executive Secretariat for Integral Development**



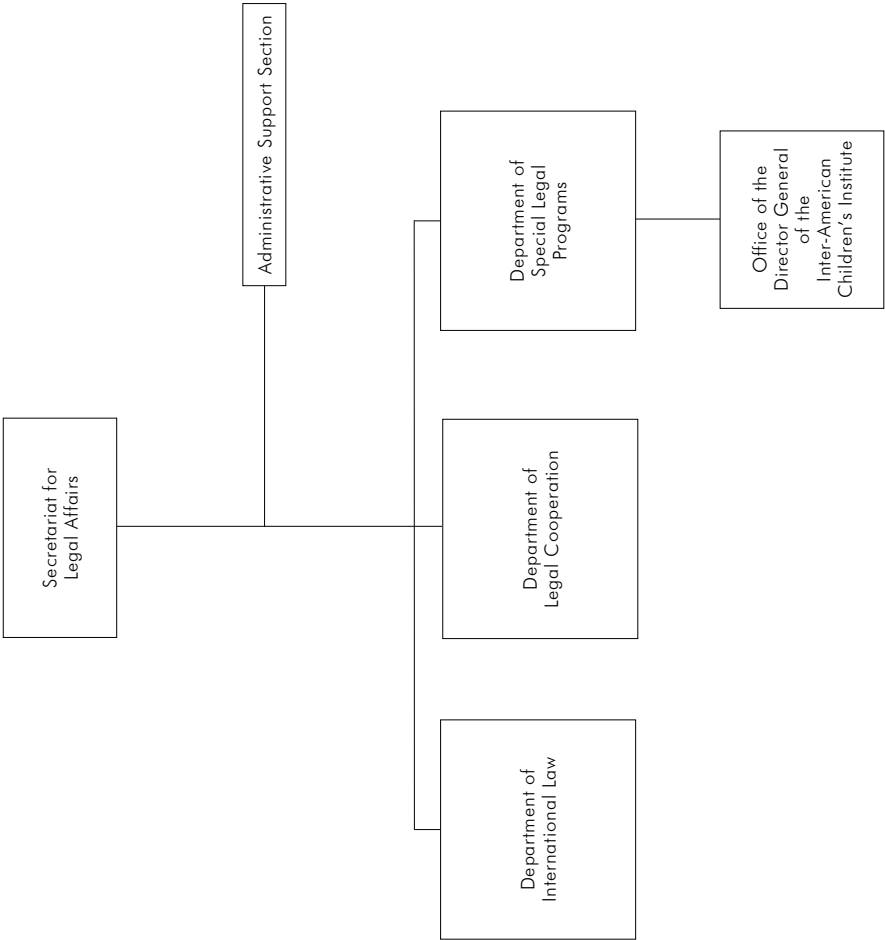
**Organizational Structure
Secretariat for Multidimensional Security**



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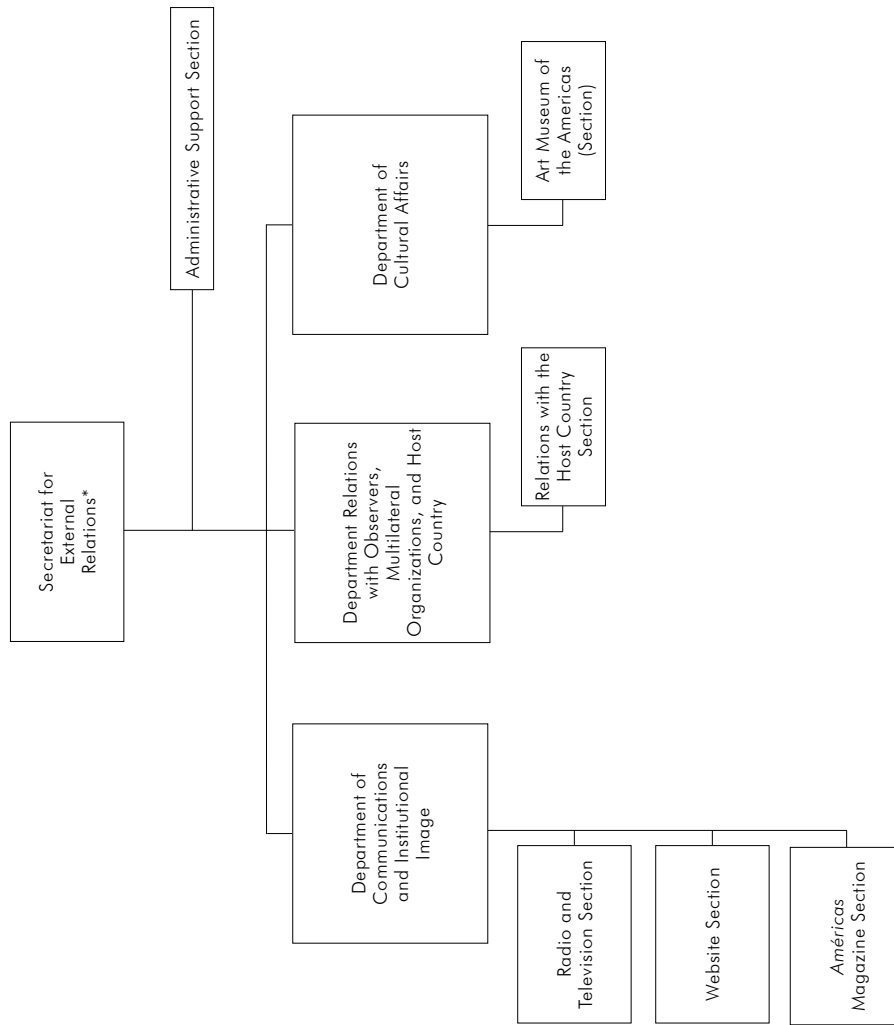


**Organizational Structure
Secretariat for Legal Affairs***



* Subject to the Approval of the General Assembly

Organizational Structure Secretariat for External Relations*



* Subject to the Approval of the General Assembly

Annex II Cooperation Between the OAS and the UN Programs

OAS Unit	UN Department	Program Description
Secretariat for Political Affairs (SAP)	UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In November 2004 the UN signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the GS/OAS to support the Haitian Provisional Electoral Council and have helped in the voter registration exercises and distribution of new national ID cards. The OAS is looking to take leadership of the important institution-building tasks of helping Haiti to create a modern civil registry system and permanent electoral institution with the aid of the UN.
	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since 2001, the OAS has been collaborating with the UNDP on the issue of political party modernization and reform and campaign and political party financing issues.
	UN Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In October 2005 the OAS and UN signed an international agreement establishing a Code of Conduct for International Election Observers and emitting a consensus based Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation. These two documents that spelled out the specific standards that international election observers should use in pursuing electoral observation. The UNEAD and DPD are planning on having more regular meetings.
	UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In August 2006, the OAS and UNICEF signed an agreement to work on activities related to free birth registration for all citizens of the Americas. Both are currently supporting the Program for the Right of Identity and Registration.
Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI)	UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have developed the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiative, a project that will take place in small and medium enterprises in the Caribbean. UNECLAC is a member of the OAS's e-Government Effectiveness Task Force.
	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDESA is a partner along with the OAS in the Customs Automated Services (CASE) initiative in Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda to modernize customs operations. The OAS has provided financial assistance and training in e-government to the program.
	UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEDI (Trust of the Americas) is currently supporting the launch of a program for at-risk youth in the Eastern Caribbean.
Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) – Department of Sustainable Development (DSD)	UN Environmental Programme (UNEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The OAS has begun work in the area of Payment for Ecological Services in cooperation with the UNEP. This is also in conjunction with the priorities of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) DSD and UNEP are working to address problems in the area of land degradation. El DDS y el PNUMA están trabajando para resolver problemas relativos a la degradación de las tierras.
	Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination (UNEP - GEF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The OAS has been a close partner with UNEP in supporting Integrated Water Resource Management. Projects include the Wider Amazon Basin project and the co-management of the largest ground-water aquifer in cooperation with Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Both sponsor the Eastern Caribbean Geothermal Development Program for sustainable energy management.
	Division of Economics and Trade (UNEP –ETU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GS/OAS signed an agreement with the ETU to establish a framework for cooperation in the area of trade and the environment. The ETU is a member of the steering committee of the DSD Trade and Environment in the Americas initiative.
	UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have worked together to identify linkages between trade and sustainable development in the identification and delivery of technical capacity-building.
	UN Children's Program (UNICEF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The OAS supports UNICEF's Vulnerability Reduction Plan for the Education Sector.
	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have worked together through various projects including technical capacity building. The DSD has established an Inter-American Network for Disaster Mitigation (INDM) in accordance with the platforms of the ISDR.
	UN Development Programme (UNDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from the UNDP enabled the OAS to provide the necessary technical expertise and management to implant the Grenada Hurricane Resilient Home Reconstruction Program in 2004.

	UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2006, the OAS and UNIDO cooperated on a program designed to support several countries in the Caribbean in the development and implementation of Sustainable Energy Plans.
Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) - Department of Science and Technology (DST)	UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTAD) and the UN Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has worked with the OAS Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and with various UN system' Organizations on the integration of a gender perspective in science and technology programs in the Americas.
Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) - Department of Trade, Tourism and Competitiveness (DTTC)	UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2006 and 2007 these organizations conducted programs in the area of trade capacity building with seminars on the administration of trade agreements, managing investment disputes, and international disputes in practice.
Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) – Department of Education and Culture (DEC)	UN Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNESCO and DEC are currently working on a number of projects that aim for the protection of culture and art in Latin American and the Caribbean.
	Regional Office for Latin American Countries (UNESCO- OREALC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Education Indicators Project (PRIE) – sponsored by UNESCO, the OAS, and the Secretariat for Public Education in Mexico this program aims to set reliable and international indicators for the education process in the Americas. Work together to create an Inter-American Teacher Educator Network. Developing the Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices with three mutually reinforcing components: research, professional development, and information exchange.
	Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programs (UNESCO –LAMP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEC is the coordinating body between UNESCO and Member countries with respect to initiatives in literacy.
	UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has worked with the DEC on project for Policies and Strategies for a successful Childhood Transition in Socialization and School.
	UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DEC is involved in the implementation of education MDGs related to education improvement in the Western Hemisphere.
Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) – Department of Social Development and Employment	UN International Labor Organization (ILO) and UN Economic and Social Council on Latin America(ECLAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretary General of the OAS and the ILO was signed by SG Insulza and Director Somavía on 2005. Through this memorandum the organizations will work together in the following areas: fair employment related with the CIMT and its declarations and activities; the Declaration and Plan of Action of the IV Summit of the Americas; the continuing of research; the fulfillment of projects related to fair employment; and other related themes. The OAS and ECLAC, along with the IDB and the World Bank, are participating in the research project "Realizing Rights through Social Policy," which will result in a joint document to be published in 2007. On April 2nd and 3rd there will be a meeting in the Washington D.C. office of ECLAC to analyze the advances of this initiative.
Secretariat for Multidimensional Security – Department of Public Security	UN Regional Centre for Peace Disarmament and Development in Latin American and the Caribbean (UNLIREC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OAS and UNLIREC work together on issues related to arms and light weapons including the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials (CIFTA).
	UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have worked closely in the training of police, prosecutors and judges in Central America on special investigative techniques for combating transnational organized crime and, on training in new accusatorial criminal justice systems. Exploring holding a joint hemispheric meeting on trafficking in persons and a project on small arms and munitions.
	UN Department for Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have worked together on transparency and arms control issues.
	United Nations Mine Action Services (UNMAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International coordination on demining in Latin America.
Secretariat for Multidimensional Security – Inter-American Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)	UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Database System (NDS) – NDS is a special software system that facilitates the control of chemical substances and pharmaceutical products. CICAD has purchased and installed software for programs in Central American countries. Have worked together to develop a manual and training program for law enforcement agencies regarding the safe disposal of chemicals used in the production of illicit drugs. Cosponsors to the Andean Regional Seminar on Marketing for Alternative Development Products for growers of coca and opium in 2006. In 2005, CICAD began providing technical support to the UNODC office in Peru to carry out research on drug consumption CICAD's Anti-Money Laundering unit carries-out mock trails in money laundering in conjunction with UNODC. CICAD is also executing a project for the development of a database for police investigations in this area.

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Secretariat for Multidimensional Security - Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE)	UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNODC assists Member States in the drafting or adaptation of counter terrorism legislation and ratification of conventions (technical assistance). • CICTE coordinates with UNODC on legislation related to financial controls. • CICTE with the aid of UNODC also conducts regional and national workshops in which participants from the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the OAS Members states exchange information, review legislative measure, and asses national counter terrorism laws.
	UN Interregional Institute for Crime and Justice Research (UNICRI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In February 2007, UNICRI and CICTE launched a new International Permanent Observatory (IPO) which is a mechanism to coordinate international cooperation for the provision of technical assistance with respect to security for major events.
	UN Regional Centre for Peace Disarmament and Development in Latin American and the Caribbean (UNLIREC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNLIREC and CICTE plan to work together to hold regional events on issues related to the United National Security Resolution 1540 on Weapons of Mass Destruction. CICTE hopes to help member states in efforts to comply with this resolution.
	UN Counter Terrorism Committee (UNCTED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2006, the Secretariat participated in a crisis management exercise based on a bioterrorism scenario and hopes to hold another exercise in the Western Hemisphere soon.
Summits of the Americas Process	ILO – ECLAC – OIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These specialized organizations work together with the OAS in the framework of the Joint Summit Working Group coordinating efforts to support the follow-up and implementation of the Summit’s mandates.
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IACHR currently has no ongoing project with the UN or UN agencies; however, the Commission and the Secretariat maintain a very fluid dialog and exchange of information with the UN and hope to begin new projects soon.

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