

PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
COMMITTEE ON INTER-AMERICAN SUMMITS MANAGEMENT
AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION
IN OAS ACTIVITIES

OEA/Ser.G
CP/CISC-121/04
13 September 2004
Original: Spanish

APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 6 OF THE
GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION BY CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANIZATIONS IN OAS ACTIVITIES [CP/RES. 759 (1217/99)]

(Ibero-American Association of Chambers of Commerce – AICO)

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION CONCERNING THE IBERO-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE - AICO

This document was prepared by the Secretariat for the Summit Process to provide information on the Ibero-American Association of Chambers of Commerce (AICO).

It contains the basic data and a list of supporting documentation submitted by this civil society organization (CSO) pursuant to the Guidelines for Participation by Civil Society Organizations in OAS Activities.

1. Background

The Ibero-American Association of Chambers of Commerce (AICO) was established on June 14, 1975, as an independent, nonprofit organization created by representatives of chambers of commerce and merchants' associations of Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and various cities and regions of Spain. This association brings together more than 400 Ibero-American chambers of commerce in 22 countries: 30 in Argentina, 19 in Bolivia, 14 in Brazil, 11 in Chile, 47 in Colombia, 22 in Costa Rica, 44 in Ecuador, 17 in Peru, 4 in El Salvador, 3 in the United States, 4 in Honduras, 11 in Nicaragua, 13 in Panama, 9 in Puerto Rico, 18 in the Dominican Republic, 67 in Mexico, 4 in Paraguay, 7 in Uruguay, and 9 in Venezuela.

AICO was formed to coordinate the work of chambers of commerce and industry of Ibero-America; to support, enhance, and promote the development of private enterprise, the free market, and business development; and to contribute to the generation of wealth and employment with social responsibility in the region. To achieve this objective, AICO has conducted experience-sharing programs involving the various chambers of commerce so that they may apply specialized practices used with success in other countries to specific areas. AICO also offers diverse support services to help the entrepreneur develop competitiveness.

To strengthen coordination among the various chambers of commerce in the region, AICO organizes regular meetings of its Management Board and a General Assembly. AICO promotes participation by international organizations in those events, so that members may learn about their activities and, accordingly, influence decisions affecting the region. In addition, AICO holds yearly Ibero-American meetings of business leaders to bring about new business opportunities, contacts, and investments, to facilitate the search for new markets, and to promote trade among Ibero-American countries. For this task, AICO has five Assistant General Secretariats in different geographic zones: Southern Cone, Europe, Central America, Caribbean, and Andes.

AICO's income is from quotas paid by the various regular members of the organization, fixed by its various governing bodies.

The Ibero-American Association of Chambers of Commerce submitted its application for registration to the OAS on January 26, 2004.

2. Name, address, and date of establishment

Name: Ibero-American Association of Chambers of Commerce – AICO

Address: Paseo de la Reforma No. 42, Col. Centro Delegación
Cuauhtémoc 06048, Mexico City, Mexico

Telephone: (52) 55 92 03 71 / (52) 55 92 26 65

Fax: (52) 57 03 29 58 57 05 53 10

Internet site: www.aico.org

E-mail address: desacom@ccmexico.com.mx

Chairman: Joaquín Zevallos M.

Date established: June 14, 1975

3. Primary areas of activity and their relationship to OAS activities

AICO's main purpose is to integrate and coordinate chambers of commerce, industry, and other sectors in its geographic area, so as to promote the world of business and free trade with social responsibility in Ibero-America.

AICO focuses on:

- Conducting studies and research on topics of free trade and business development, to support Ibero-American businesses by providing them with an overview of the economic, political, and social situation in the international arena.
- Maintaining close contact with international organizations and government agencies that identify with the aspirations of the productive and commercial sectors in the region, working toward an entrepreneurial culture in Ibero-America.
- Encouraging greater participation by chambers of commerce and the private sector of Latin America in negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).
- Entering into cooperation and exchange agreements with European chambers of commerce, to draw upon their services and experience.
- Maintaining, on its website, the Ibero-American Trade Information Network, an instrument to promote the use of modern means of communication, such as the Internet and e-mail, by its affiliates.
- Providing advisory services to small and medium-sized enterprises on the use of electronic commerce and its various information technology applications.
- Regularly sending studies and publications in the economic field to international organizations associated with AICO.

4. Contributions by the CSO that could be of interest to the OAS

AICO believes it could contribute to OAS activities through programs to strengthen and develop the business sector and free trade in the Hemisphere. The cooperation offered by AICO centers on:

- Conducting institution-building programs for chambers of commerce and the private sector in Ibero-America, through the transfer of expertise and knowledge on income generation, resource management, and implementation of new technologies.
- Implementing business training programs in the context of cooperation agreements with the Chamber of Commerce of Madrid and the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), to support the training of the entrepreneur and promote competitiveness.
- Organizing forums and seminars geared toward disseminating knowledge that could be important to the economic and social development of enterprises.
- Conducting economic studies to keep the businessperson informed and up to date.
- Supporting and participating in FTAA negotiations through the chambers of commerce affiliated with AICO.
- Establishing cooperative relations among different chambers of commerce in the region and the private sector, to assist in creating new jobs, promoting the transfer of new technologies, formulating trade policy, and creating investment opportunities.

5. OAS work areas to which the CSO can provide support

AICO's aims are shared by various areas of endeavor at the OAS. Therefore, it could collaborate and provide advisory services and technical support on matters such as regional economic integration, increasing trade exchange, and FTAA negotiations. AICO could work with the OAS in the following areas:

- Cooperating with the Trade Unit of the OAS General Secretariat in support of efforts to increase economic exchange and economic integration in the Hemisphere.
- Providing information and advisory services to the Trade Unit in the preparation of technical documents for FTAA bodies and on topics related to trade in the Americas.
- Collaborating with the Trade Unit and with its Foreign Trade Information System (SICE) to meet the information needs of the public by way of conferences, presentations, publications, and training courses; and disseminating extensive information on regional integration and the FTAA process.
- Supporting the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) in reaching its goal of promoting integral development in the Americas, through cooperation among countries and coordination and cooperation among chambers of commerce and the private sector in the countries of the region.
- Supporting activities to strengthen dialogue on development policy in the Hemisphere, to promote cooperation in the context of CIDI.
- Participating in projects of the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (AICD) that support the private sector and provide technical cooperation to member states.

- Supporting the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Juridical Committee, the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission, the Young Americas Business Trust, the Inter-American Committee on Ports, and the Justice Studies Center of the Americas.

6. Documents submitted by the CSO

- Letter addressed to the Secretary General, January 26, 2004
- Incorporation papers of the Ibero-American Association of Chambers of Commerce (AICO)
- Statutes of the Ibero-American Association of Chambers of Commerce (AICO)
- Schedule of activities of the General Secretariat of AICO for 2003
- Document on project “Toward a New International Financial Architecture (NAFI)”
- AICO declaration from the city of Seville, Spain, November 9 to 12, 2003
- AICO directors summary, January 20, 2004
- Financial statements of the Ibero-American Association of Chambers of Commerce (AICO) for the period from September 1, 2002, to August 31, 2003, audited by PricewaterhouseCoopers, S.C.