



## INFORMATIVE BULLETIN No.2

FIRST INTER-AMERICAN MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH LEVEL AUTHORITIES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
OCTOBER 5-6, 2006, SANTA CRUZ DE LA SIERRA, BOLIVIA

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

"It is increasingly recognized that any development effort requires the active involvement of an informed civil society to be truly sustainable. Public participation in the decision-making process introduces a broader range of ideas, experiences, and expertise that motivate the development of alternative solutions. Public participation provides opportunities for cooperation and coordination between government and civil society. All this is particularly true in dealing with issues related to the environment and sustainable development, since they affect people from all segments of society and can bring them together to work toward common goals."

*Inter-American Strategy for the Promotion of Public Participation  
in Decision-Making for Sustainable Development  
OAS/DSD*

### 1. Advances in Public Participation Initiatives in the Ministerial Meeting framework

#### Virtual Consultation Forum

In the framework of the **First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Sustainable Development that will take place in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, October 5-6, 2006**, the Department of Sustainable Development (DSD) of the OAS, in cooperation with the Secretariat of Summits of the Americas and Development Gateway Foundation, initiated a process of consultation through a Virtual Forum with Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples on May 17th:

(<http://topics.developmentgateway.org/environment/discussion/default/showDiscussion.do?id=1441>). The Forum's objectives include: (1) Mobilize civil society and indigenous peoples support for the preparation of the Santa Cruz Declaration; (2) Build consensus positions and recommendations among representatives of civil society and indigenous peoples and obtain recommendation and follow-up activities on the three themes to be analyzed during the meeting; and (3) Benefit from the best practices efforts, including advocacy, of civil society and indigenous peoples work on the three themes to be analyzed during the meeting. The Forum will remain open until September 30th to receive comments and recommendations that will be considered in the preparation of the *Santa Cruz Declaration*.

Below is a summary of some of the comments posted in the Forum:

- Need to consider the connection of environmental health with sustainable development, and the links with education and respect for traditional knowledge and technologies.
- For the design of sustainable development strategies for countries in development, infrastructure projects should be designed and constructed with sustainability criteria founded on processes of community participation.
- One of the priorities for sustainable development should be the management of water resources upon which agriculture depends.
- The community in general should participate in sustainable development with its own natural resources, but without the expropriation of them.
- Funds are needed to invest in the development of indigenous communities. More help is needed from the international community.
- There is interest in sharing successful experiences related to payment for environmental services in Latin America
- A larger inclusion of women in the workplace and political systems is needed.
- For sustainable development, we need to let the local partners to implement the program and build their capacity.
- If one gives the poor the chance to improve their situation using their own resources, sustainability can be expected. Much more could be reached by investing in professional inputs and the documentation respectively spreading out of such approaches.
- Importance of traditional knowledge as a tool for a sustainable economic growth.
- To make development sustainable, we shall have to implement demand driven project. Beneficiaries should feel the ownership of the project.
- Improved access to technologies is a key factor of sustainable development.
- The most efficient way to sustainability in development is the development of the new (knowledge) economy that relies not on scarce (non-renewable) resources but on the network effects of the global digital economy based on knowledge.
- Establish a Virtual Interactive Think Tank (VITT) on Sustainable Development.
- Use of sustainable innovation processes as the main driver of competitiveness (and therefore productivity) globally.

#### Local Consultations

In order to facilitate broad-based participation of civil society during the preparatory process of the Ministerial Meeting, and to facilitate the dialogue between civil society and different community groups on the fundamental themes related to regional sustainable development, the DSD, in cooperation with the Canadian International Development Agency and the Summits of the Americas Secretariat, is organizing a series of local consultations with civil society. These consultations will take place in Buenos Aires, Trinidad & Tobago, and Washington, DC. The objective of these consultations is to obtain comments from the civil society to be considered in the preparation of the draft **Declaration of Santa Cruz**. The report from these consultations will be available for subsequent local consultations and on the Ministerial Meeting website ([http://www.oas.org/dsd/MinisterialMeeting/ReunionInterAm\\_eng\\_v1.htm](http://www.oas.org/dsd/MinisterialMeeting/ReunionInterAm_eng_v1.htm)).



### **Participation during the Ministerial Meeting**

Prior to the Ministerial Meeting, on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006, a roundtable discussion will take place with civil society representatives to present the results from the local consultations and the Virtual Consultation Forum, and to promote the dialogue in order to finalize the document that will contain their recommendations. This document will be presented to the Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Sustainable Development in the region during the First Plenary Session of the Ministerial Meeting that will take place on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

**IMPORTANT: Civil society representatives that wish to participate in the Ministerial Meeting (October 5<sup>th</sup>) should send a letter addressed to the Secretary General of the OAS, Mr. José Miguel Insulza, expressing their desire to do so, at the following address:**

**Summits of the Americas Secretariat  
Organization of American States  
6th Floor  
1889 F Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006**

## **2. Themes that the Ministerial Address**

The **Workshop on Natural Disaster Management**, that took place in Kingston, Jamaica on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of April, 2006, was the second of three workshops of experts organized by the DSD related to the themes of the Ministerial agenda. The objective of the workshop was to consolidate knowledge from experts and specialists to establish strategies to promote improved management of natural disasters and reduce their possible effects. It also identified policies, projects, and areas of cooperation that allow progress in both the mitigation and transfer of risks. The discussion emphasized the following priority areas: (i) identify projects, policies and cooperative partnerships that make progress in both risk mitigation and risk transfer, in particular, governance-related building codes and standards adaptation monitoring and enforcement, and land-use planning and zoning; (ii) strengthen economic analysis associated with the benefits and costs of risk mitigation and risk sharing, and mainstream risk mitigation and expenditures in development and economic planning; (iii) identify best practices in the adoption of risk mitigation technical standards; (iv) identify specific risk sharing and risk transfer initiatives at the regional and sub-regional levels, including through insurance pooling; and (v) integrate a perspective of environmental protection, social equality and sustainable development with a gender perspective in natural disasters risk management.

The recommendations of the workshop include:

- Promote citizen participation into educational and training programs that involve governments, private sector, civil society, academia, and international agencies.
- Create a regulatory framework, codes, design and construction standards and certification to evaluate and reduce the vulnerability of educational infrastructure.
- Create an Inter-American Mechanism for disaster reduction on the need of reinforcing existing networks and cooperation of agencies, NGOs, and civil society under different scenarios.
- Incorporate a gender perspective in natural disasters prevention.
- Promoting the creation of legal frameworks with more emphasis on citizen participation is the key to building systems and regulations dealing with prevention, mitigation and response to disasters.

All the documents related to the Workshop of Natural Disaster Management, including a complete list of recommendations, are available at: [http://www.oas.org/dsd/MinisterialMeeting/ReunionInterAm\\_eng\\_Wkhp2.htm](http://www.oas.org/dsd/MinisterialMeeting/ReunionInterAm_eng_Wkhp2.htm). The previous edition of this Informative Bulletin included a summary of the Workshop on Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism. The next edition will include a summary of the recommendations from the Workshop on Integrated Water Resources Management that took place in Quito, Ecuador in June 2006.

For more information about the Ministerial visit our website: <http://www.oas.org/dsd/> and/or [http://www.oas.org/dsd/MinisterialMeeting/ReunionInterAm\\_eng\\_v1.htm](http://www.oas.org/dsd/MinisterialMeeting/ReunionInterAm_eng_v1.htm) or contact Joaquin Tamayo ([jtamayo@oas.org](mailto:jtamayo@oas.org))  
Tel:(202) 458-3000/Fax:(202) 458-3560  
Department of Sustainable Development  
Organization of American States  
1889 F Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006

The Organization of American States (OAS) is the world's oldest regional organization, dating back to the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C., in 1889. The Charter of the OAS was signed in Bogotá in 1948. The OAS currently has 35 member States and has granted permanent observer status to over 48 states. The OAS is the region's premier forum for multilateral dialogue and concerted action, it brings together the countries of the Western Hemisphere to strengthen cooperation and advance common interests.

Through its Department of Sustainable Development (DSD), the General Secretariat of the OAS (GS/OAS) fulfills member States mandates by promoting the implementation of policies, technical cooperation projects and partnerships that translate sustainable development and environmental protection goals into concrete action. A key objective entails integrating environmental priorities set by OAS member States within mainstream development, poverty alleviation and good governance-related policies.