



BRIEFING MATERIALS

ParlAmericas Delegation to Washington, D.C.

**Democracy, Rights, and Development in the
Americas and the Caribbean:
Parliamentary Perspectives for a Renewed
Inter-American Agenda**

March 17-19, 2026

PARLAMERICAS SECRETARIAT WHATSAPP CONTACTS

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Annual ParlAmericas Parliamentary Delegation to the OAS

The annual parliamentary delegation to Washington has been conceived as ParlAmericas' response to the mandate established through Resolution AG/RES. 3029 (LIV-O/24), adopted at the 54th General Assembly, which formalized structured engagement between ParlAmericas and the OAS.

These delegations convene legislators from the Americas and the Caribbean for high-level dialogues with authorities of the OAS, Permanent Missions to the OAS, members of the United States Congress, and other key stakeholders.

Through these delegations, ParlAmericas helps ensure that parliamentary perspectives inform hemispheric debates, while fostering greater political coordination and cooperation within the Inter-American System.

This year's delegation is convening under the theme *“Democracy, Rights, and Development in the Americas and the Caribbean: Parliamentary Perspectives for a Renewed Inter-American Agenda”*

Democracy and diplomacy are essential foundations for peace, development, and human dignity across the Americas and the Caribbean. Yet rising political polarization fuelled by citizen frustrations, economic pressures, and a convergence of regional and global crises – amid rapid geopolitical shifts that are challenging established international frameworks and expectations – is placing long-standing mechanisms of cooperation and democratic governance under significant strain.

In this context, the coinciding 25th anniversaries of ParlAmericas and the Inter-American Democratic Charter provide a timely opportunity to consider how a strengthened inter-American system, rooted in collaborative and resilient democracies, can foster regional security, inclusive and mutually beneficial development, and the well-being of all people.

Through interparliamentary consultations with member states and officials of the Organization of American States, as well as counterparts from the United States Congress, this year's ParlAmericas Delegation to Washington offers an opportunity for legislators from across the Americas and the Caribbean to advance a constructive dialogue and strengthen commitment to regional cooperation rooted in sovereignty and democratic governance, in order to deliver shared prosperity within and across nations.

Official Hotel: State Plaza Hotel
2117 E Street, N.W. Washington D.C. 20037

OAS Headquarters/buildings:

OAS Main Building
17th Street and Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006



OAS General Secretariat Building
1889 F Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 (on the corner of 19th Street and F Street)



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AGENDA OVERVIEW

Monday, March 16

Throughout the day **Arrival of delegates**

Tuesday, March 17

08:30 **Meet in the hotel lobby**

08:45 - 09:10 **Transfer to and registration at the Organization of American States**
Rubén Darío Room – OAS General Services Building, 8th floor (1889 F Street NW, 20006)

09:10 - 09:30 **Welcome Remarks**

09:30 - 10:15 **Civil Society Participation: Cornerstone of Democratic Renewal in the Inter-American System**

Inter-Parliamentary Exchange with Her Excellency Laura Gil, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States

10:15 - 10:30 **Health break**

10:30 - 12:30 **Building Democratic Resilience: Interactive Working Session with the Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy**

12:30 - 13:15 **Lunch**

13:15 - 13:45 **Transfer to and arrival at the Main Building of the Organization of American States**
OAS Main Building (17th St. and Constitution Ave. NW)

13:45 - 14:30 **Protocolary meeting with his Excellence Ambassador Luis Ernesto Vargas, Chair of the Permanent Council of the OAS, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the OAS**
Guerrero Room – OAS Main Building (17th St. and Constitution Ave. NW)

14:30 - 16:30 **The Inter-American Democratic Charter at 25: Reaffirming a Hemispheric Commitment to Democracy and Human Rights**

High-Level Dialogue with Representatives of Permanent Missions to the OAS
Hall of the Americas, OAS Main Building (17th St. and Constitution Ave. NW)

16:30 **Reception**
Patio Azteca, OAS Main Building (17th St. and Constitution Ave. NW)

Wednesday, March 18

- 08:30 **Meet in the hotel lobby**
- 08:45 - 09:00 **Transfer to and arrival at the Organization of American States**
Rubén Darío Room – OAS General Services Building, 8th floor (1889 F Street NW, 20006)
- 09:00 - 10:00 **Women, Peace and Security: Parliamentary Action for Inclusive and Sustainable Peace**
- 10:00 - 10:15 **Health break**
- 10:15 - 12:00 **Security and Institutional Cooperation: Insights from the Inter-American System**
- 12:00 - 12:15 **Information Session ahead of the U.S. Congress Dialogue**
- 12:15 - 13:15 **Lunch**
- 13:15 - 14:00 **Transfer to the U.S. Congress**
- 14:00 - 14:30 **Arrival and registration at the U.S. Congress**
U.S. Congress (Washington, DC 20004, USA)
- 14:30 - 16:00 **Legislative Dialogue on delivering shared prosperity in the Western Hemisphere**
- 16:00 - 16:30 **Group photo at the U.S. Congress**
- 16:30 **U.S. Congress guided tour**

Thursday, March 19






- 08:30 **Meet in the hotel lobby**
- 08:40 - 09:10 **Transfer and arrival at the Organization of American States**
Guerrero Room – OAS Main Building (17th St. and Constitution Ave. NW)
- 09:10-10:00 **Technical Briefing: Haitian-led Roadmap for Stability and Peace with Regional and International Support**
- 10:00 - 11:00 **Inter-Parliamentary Exchange with His Excellency Albert Ramdin, Secretary General of the Organization of American States**
- 11:00 - 11:30 **Transfer and arrival at the F-Street Building**
Rubén Darío Room – OAS General Services Building, 8th floor (1889 F Street NW, 20006)
- 11:30 - 13:00 **Transforming Mental Health in the Americas through Inter-American Cooperation**
- 13:00 - 14:00 **Lunch**
- 14:00 - 16:00 **Economic Development and Labour in the Americas and the Caribbean**
- 16:00 - 17:00 **Closing session: Reflections and takeaways**

The following ParlAmericas resources may be helpful for your work on themes covered by the delegation's activities. These can be accessed on the ParlAmericas website (<https://parlamericas.org/publications>) which can be accessed through this QR Code:



- [The Impacts of Transnational Organized Crime on Citizen Security in the Americas and the Caribbean: A Primer for Parliamentarians](#)
- [Inclusive Migration Governance in the Americas and Caribbean: A Primer for Parliamentarians](#)
- [Future Perspectives in Parliamentary Work](#)
- [Intergenerational Perspectives in Parliamentary Work](#)
- [Promoting Inclusion and Equality through Parliamentary Youth Programming](#)
- [Citizen Participation in the Legislative Process](#)
- [ParlAmericas and the OAS \(2015-2025\): A Key Decade in a Continuing Partnership](#)
- [Contributions to the Implementation of the IX Summit of the Americas Commitments](#)
- [Parliamentary Diplomacy in Action: Advancing Multidimensional Security and Regional Cooperation Toward the Tenth Summit of the Americas](#)

MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION

	<p>Senator Iván Flores García (Chile), President of ParlAmericas Senator since 2022. He chairs the Senate Health Committee, after having headed the Public Safety and Agriculture Committees. Between 2019 and 2020 he presided over the Chamber of Deputies, where he served for two legislative terms (2014-2022).</p>
	<p>The Honourable Alvina Bertram Reynolds (Saint Lucia), President of the Senate and Vice-President of ParlAmericas Senator since 2021. She has held the position of President of the Senate since 2022. From 2011 to 2016, she served as Minister for Health, Wellness, Human Services, and Gender Relations, and Member of the House of Assembly during the same period.</p>
	<p>Patricia Lattanzio (Canada), Member of Parliament and Second Vice-President of ParlAmericas Member of Parliament since 2019. She is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, and serves on the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. She is currently the President of the ParlAmericas Corporation, and Chair of the Canadian Section of the organization.</p>
	<p>The Honourable Osbert Frederick (Antigua and Barbuda), Speaker of the House of Representatives Speaker of the House of Representatives of Antigua and Barbuda since September 2024. He previously served as a Senator in the Upper House, first appointed in 2007, then reappointed in 2014, when he was chosen as Vice President of the Senate, and reappointed again in 2018 and 2023. He currently serves on the ParlAmericas Council, representing the Caribbean.</p>
	<p>Member of the Chamber of Deputies Karina Banfi (Argentina) Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Argentina since 2015. Her work also includes service as Regional Coordinator of transparency programmes with the OAS and as adviser on freedom of expression to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. She previously served as President of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality (2017–2019).</p>



The Honourable John Andrew King (Barbados), Senator

Appointed to the Senate of Barbados in 2022. Previously served as a member of the House of Assembly of Barbados from 2018 to 2021, when he was also Minister of the Creative Economy, Culture, and Sports.



The Honourable Devin Daly (Belize), Member of Parliament and Minister of State in the Ministry of Youth & Sports

Member of the House of Representatives of Belize since his first election in 2025. He has also been appointed Minister of State in the Ministry of Youth and Sports in the Government of Belize.



The Honourable Senator Linsford Castillo (Belize), Vice-President of the Senate

Senator in the National Assembly of Belize since March 2025. He also serves as the Secretary General of the People's United Party (PUP). He was a member of UNESCO's Board of Advisors (2006 – 2008).



Senator Diego Esteban Mateo Ávila Navajas (Bolivia), President of the Senate

Senator in the Chamber of Senators of Bolivia since 2025. Elected President of the Senate in 2025.



Senator Paola Limbania López Zeballos (Bolivia)

Senator in the Chamber of Senators of Bolivia since 2025. She is a member of the State Security Committee and Secretary of the State Security and Anti-Drug Trafficking Committee.



Sandra Cobena (Canada), Member of Parliament

Member of the House of Commons of Canada since 2025. She is member of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance and is associated with various interparliamentary groups. She currently serves as a Counsellor to the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas.



The Honourable Suze Youance (Canada), Senator

Appointed to the Senate of Canada in September 2024. She is a member of the Committees on National security, Defence and Veteran Affairs, on the Rules, Procedures and Rights of the Parliament, and on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources. She is the President of the Scientific Council of the UNESCO Chair “Women and Science for Development” in Haiti.



Senator Vlado Mirosevic (Chile)

Elected senator in 2025. Previously served as a member of the Chamber of Deputies from 2014 to 2025. He has served on the committees on Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Extremes Zones, and chaired the Chamber from November 2022 to July 2023. He currently serves on the ParlAmericas Council, representing South America.



The Honourable Elizabeth Jay-Pang Díaz (Colombia), Member of the House of Representatives

Serves as a Member of the House of Representatives since 2018. She is currently a member of the Legislative Committees on International Relations and on the Protection of the Rights of Afro-Colombian Populations. She currently serves on the ParlAmericas Council, representing South America.



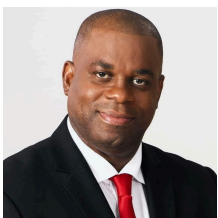
Member of the Legislative Assembly Carlos Felipe García Molina (Costa Rica)

Member of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica for the 2022–2026 term. He currently chairs the Special Standing Commission on Youth and serves as secretary of the Ordinary Standing Committee of Financial Matters.









Member of the Legislative Assembly Carolina Delgado Ramírez (Costa Rica)

Member of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica for the 2022–2026 term. She previously held the same position from 2012 to 2014. She currently chairs the Special Standing Commission on Women and serves as secretary of the Special Standing Committee on Infrastructure. She also serves as secretary of the Front of Women in Political Parties. She currently serves on the ParlAmericas Council, representing Central America.



The Honourable Joseph T. Isaac (Dominica), Speaker of the House of Assembly

Speaker of the House of Assembly of the Commonwealth of Dominica since 2020. He is currently the chairperson of the Standing Orders Committee, the Privileges Committee and the Parliamentary Proceedings and Broadcasting Committee of the House of Assembly. He is, also, currently the Chairman of the Constituency Boundaries Commission. He currently serves on the ParlAmericas Council, representing the Caribbean.

	<p>Member of the National Assembly María Paula Villacreses Herrera (Ecuador) Member of the National Assembly of Ecuador since May 2025. She serves on the Permanent Commission on Oversight and Political Control.</p>
	<p>The Honourable Dr. Dessima Williams (Grenada), President of the Senate President of the Senate since 2022. Dr. Williams formerly served as Grenada’s Ambassador to the United Nations and the Organization of American States. She currently is a member of the ParlAmericas Council, representing the Caribbean.</p>
	<p>The Honourable Leo Cato (Grenada), Speaker of the House of Representatives Speaker of the House of Representatives since 2022. Speaker Cato previously held various positions in Grenada’s Ministry of Education specializing in information technology curriculum and training. He currently is the Vice-President for the Caribbean of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network.</p>
	<p>Member of Congress Maria Fernanda Sandres (Honduras) Elected for the 2026–2030 legislative period for her first mandate. She serves as the Vice-Chair of the Committee on Gender Equality. She is also a member of the Committees on Education, on Finance and External Cooperation, and on Science and Technology.</p>
	<p>Member of Congress Sara Elizabeth Estrada Zavala (Honduras) Elected for the 2026–2030 legislative period for her first mandate. She serves as Chair of the Committee on Ethics and Transparency and as Secretary of the Committee on Telecommunications. She is also a member of the Committees on Justice and Human Rights, on Labor and Union Affairs, and on Social Economy.</p>
	<p>Member of Congress Valeska Yamileth Valenzuela Chávez (Honduras) Member of Congress in Honduras since 202w, currently in her second term. In February 2026, she was appointed as Vice-President of a Special Committee of Investigation of the National Congress of Honduras that will follow-up on femicide cases.</p>



Member of the Chamber of Deputies Paulina Rubio Fernandez (Mexico)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico since 2021, currently in her second term. She was elected in 2025 as Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies. She previously served as Secretary of the Justice and of the Constitutional Affairs Committees.



Member of the Chamber of Deputies Pedro Haces Barba (Mexico)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico since 2024. He was previously a member of the Senate of Mexico (2018-2019). He serves as Vice-President for North America in the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Security.



Honourable Member of the National Assembly Joan Manuel Guevara (Panama)

Member of the National Assembly since 2024. He is Chair of the Committee on Foreign Relations and member of the Committee on Population, Environment, and Development. He currently serves on the ParlAmericas Council, representing Central America.



Senator Derlis Maidana (Paraguay)

Member of the Chamber of Senators of Paraguay since 2023. He was previously a member of the Chamber of Deputies of Paraguay from 2018 to 2023. Maidana currently chairs the Committee on Legislation, Codification, Justice and Labor. He serves as Second Vice-President for South America in the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Security.



Member of Congress Ilich López (Peru)

Member of the Congress of the Republic since 2021. He has been serving as third vice president of the Congress since 2025. From 2024 to 2025, he served as Chair of the Economy, Banking, Finance, and Financial Intelligence Committee.



The Honourable Lanein Blanchette (Saint Kitts and Nevis), Speaker of the National Assembly

Speaker of the National Assembly of Saint Kitts and Nevis since 2022, the second woman and youngest person elected to that office. She currently serves on the ParlAmericas Council, representing the Caribbean, as well as First Vice-President for the Caribbean in the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Security.



The Honourable Ronnia Durham-Balcombe (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Speaker of the House of Assembly

Speaker of the House of Assembly of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines since December 2025, when she also started her first mandate at the House.



The Honourable Jemalie John (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly

Senator and Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines since December 2025, serving his first mandate.



The Honourable Jagdeo Singh (Trinidad and Tobago), Speaker of the House of Representatives

Speaker of the House of Representatives of Trinidad and Tobago since May 2025, and Chairman of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee. He currently serves on the ParlAmericas Council, representing the Caribbean.

ABOUT PARLAMERICAS

Background on ParlAmericas

- In 1999, Resolution 1673/99 of the **General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) provided for the creation of a parliamentary forum of the member states** of the Inter-American System.
- In line with this resolution, **the chairs of the foreign relations committees of the national parliaments of OAS Member States** held a meeting at the OAS in Washington D.C. on March 29 and 30, 2000, where they **agreed to establish the Inter-parliamentary Forum of the Americas** (FIPA, by its Spanish initials).
- **FIPA, which was later renamed ParlAmericas**, held its inaugural meeting in Ottawa, Canada, on March 7 and 9, 2001. It was officially recognized at the III Summit of the Americas held that year in Quebec City, Canada, **where it received a specific mandate within the Plan of Action of the Summit of the Americas in Québec City to serve as a hemispheric mechanism for parliamentary cooperation and the exchange of experiences and good legislative practices.**
- Since then, ParlAmericas has been the inter-parliamentary organization that convenes the national legislatures of the 35 countries of the Western hemisphere.
- **In 2026, ParlAmericas celebrates its 25th anniversary**, reaffirming a quarter century of parliamentary diplomacy within the Inter-American System. This milestone highlights the organization's political relevance as a space for dialogue, consensus-building, and coordinated legislative responses to the shared challenges facing the hemisphere.

Present-day ParlAmericas

ParlAmericas is an institution run by parliamentarians, for parliamentarians. Convening the national parliaments from across the Americas and the Caribbean, ParlAmericas is governed by a Council which is composed of elected executive members and individuals designated by member parliaments to serve on the Council, as well as *ex-officio* representation from the [International Secretariat](#) and the immediate past President.

Currently ParlAmericas has four permanent working groups, known as Networks, that are dedicated to parliamentary action on the themes of [gender equality](#), [open parliament](#), [climate change and sustainability](#) and [security](#). Each Network is governed by an Executive Committee, composed of a President and sub-regional Vice-Presidents representing North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean.

For more information on our Council and Executive Committees please consult the ParlAmericas website: <https://www.parlamericas.org/parlamericas-council/>

Institutional Relationship with the OAS

- In 2001, the OAS General Assembly issued a resolution recognizing the establishment of FIPA (now ParlAmericas) and requesting technical support from the OAS Secretariat to organize the first Plenary Assembly.
- Starting in 2004, the members of the ParlAmericas Council undertake periodic visits to the OAS for meetings with officials and permanent missions, and ParlAmericas representatives attend OAS General Assemblies.
- ParlAmericas began to carry out joint activities with different OAS departments, including holding meetings and producing publications.
- In 2012, ParlAmericas formalized its relationship with the OAS General Secretariat through a Memorandum of Understanding, which was updated and re-signed in 2016.
- In 2016, ParlAmericas formalized its relationship with the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) through a Letter of Understanding.
- In 2018, ParlAmericas became a founding member of the Inter-American Task Force on Women's Leadership.
- In June 2023, the General Assembly approved resolution AG/RES. 3004 (LIII-O/23), which instructed the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) and the Committee on Inter-American Summits Management and Civil Society Participation in OAS Activities (CISC) to hold a special meeting on legislative cooperation.
- In March 2024, the special meeting was held and, in that context, ParlAmericas presented a proposal that provided a roadmap to regularize and strengthen parliamentary engagement in the OAS through ParlAmericas. The proposal was well-received by the Member States.
- The document was presented during a ParlAmericas Parliamentary Delegation to Washington, D.C. to further strengthen the institutional collaboration between the two organizations.
- Resolution AG/RES. 3029 (LIV-O/24), adopted during the 54th General Assembly, formalized the engagement between ParlAmericas and the OAS, establishing the annual presentation of a ParlAmericas report to the Permanent Council, as well as an annual technical meeting between ParlAmericas and the OAS General Secretariat.
- In 2025, ParlAmericas signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI/OAS) to strengthen collaboration on transformative technologies, including artificial intelligence, and to support regional capacity-building in technological foresight for evidence-based policymaking, data analysis, and regulatory development.

BRIEFING NOTES: TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2026

The following information aims to provide an overview of the institutions and stakeholders with whom the delegation will meet, in order to support informed and productive exchanges.

Session 1: Civil Society Participation: Cornerstone of Democratic Renewal in the Inter-American System – Inter-Parliamentary Exchange with Her Excellency Laura Gil, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States

Time: 09:30 - 10:15

Location: Rubén Darío Room – OAS General Services Building, 8th floor (1889 F Street NW, 20006)

Description of the session

This session will explore how the OAS is working to strengthen inclusive spaces for dialogue that connect citizens, civil society organizations, and democratic institutions across the region. The discussion will focus on how meaningful participation enhances the quality of democratic decision-making, reinforces the legitimacy of multilateral action, and contributes to more resilient democratic governance.

Conceived as an open exchange with parliamentarians, the session will invite reflection on how parliaments and the Inter-American system can better align their efforts to support civic participation and strengthen democratic space, reinforcing the democratic legitimacy and relevance of hemispheric cooperation.

About Laura Gil, Assistant Secretary General of the OAS



Role of Assistant Secretary General of the OAS: Has served in this position since July 2025. She is the first woman to hold this position in the Organization’s history.

Career experience: Prior to her election, she served as Colombia’s Vice Minister for Multilateral Affairs (2022–2023) and, from 2023, as Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Vienna, where she led the adoption of the resolution that broke the “Vienna consensus” and established the first independent panel to review the international drug control regime in more than six decades, described as a “turning point” in global drug policy. Under her leadership, Colombia chaired the Vienna Chapter of the G-77+China for the first time (2024).

Possible questions for the dialogue:

1. What trends are currently shaping civic participation and the relationship between citizens, civil society, and public institutions, and where do you see the most significant pressures affecting democratic space?
2. In this context, how can parliaments contribute to strengthening meaningful civic participation and ensuring that public institutions remain responsive to the voices and expectations of citizens and organized civil society?

Session 2: Building Democratic Resilience: Interactive Working Session with the Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy

Time: 10:30 - 12:30

Location: Rubén Darío Room – OAS General Services Building, 8th floor (1889 F Street NW, 20006)

Description of the session

This session will feature a concise institutional briefing on the mandate and priority initiatives of the Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy, followed by an interactive format designed to deepen engagement between parliamentarians and the leadership of its four programmatic pillars. After introductory remarks from the Secretary for Strengthening Democracy and short presentations from each departmental director, participants will rotate through small-group dialogue sessions, enabling direct discussion on current challenges, strategic priorities, and opportunities for collaboration across the hemisphere.

Speakers:

- **Sebastián Eugenio Kraljevich Chadwick**, Secretary for Strengthening Democracy, OAS
- **Maria Teresa Mellenkamp**, Officer in Charge of the Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions, OAS
- **Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian**, Director of the Department of Access and Rights, OAS
- **Gerardo de Icaza**, Director of the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation, OAS
- **Maria Fernanda Trigo**, Director of the Department for Effective Public Management, OAS

About the Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy at OAS:

The mission of the Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy is to contribute to the strengthening of political processes in the Member States, in particular to upholding democracy as the best option for guaranteeing peace, security, and development. It focuses its actions on strengthening the role of the Organization as the central axis of the Inter-American System in the political arena and on actively contributing to democratic sustainability in the Member States.

The Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy is composed of the Executive Office and following dependencies: *the Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation; the Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions; the Department of Access to Rights; and the Department for Effective Public Management.*

The Secretariat also coordinates the [Voluntary Group of the Inter-American Democratic Charter](#).

About Sebastián Kraljevich, Secretary for Strengthening Democracy, OAS



Role of Secretary for Strengthening Democracy of the Organization of American States (OAS): Has served in this position since July 2025.

Career experience: Served as Permanent Representative of Chile to the OAS from April 2022 to July 2025. Chaired the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs and the Voluntary Group for the Follow-up to the Inter-American Democratic Charter between 2023 and 2024. In 2025, he served as Chair of the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs (CAAP) of the OAS. He has also served as an advisor to elected officials in national and subnational governments and institutions in various countries.

Since 2012, he has served as an Adjunct Professor in the Master's Program in Political Science at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile and as a visiting professor at universities in Chile, Mexico, Colombia, and the United States, as well as a lecturer for the UNESCO Chair.

About the Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions (DSDSM):

Through DSDSM, the OAS Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy provides support to the General Secretariat in handling political and institutional conflicts in the region.

The Department carries out efforts in three interrelated areas to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts: it implements a methodology for political analysis; provides advice and technical support to missions established by the Permanent Council or the OAS Secretary General; and finally, coordinates activities geared toward the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes and the promotion of a culture of peace.

About Maria Teresa Mellenkamp, Officer in Charge of the Department of Sustainable Democracy and Special Missions, OAS



Role of Officer in Charge of the DSDSM: Has served in this position since 2020.

Career Experience: Maria Mellenkamp has worked at the OAS since 1993 and has led technical cooperation work related to elections and democratic governance, including support on electoral management topics such as voter registration, quality management, and related institutional processes across countries in the region. She has also contributed to international standards and good practices in electoral administration, including work connected to ISO/TS 54001 on quality management for electoral organizations.

About the Department of Access to Rights (DAR):

The DAR supports OAS Member States in tackling inequality and advancing social inclusion grounded in a human rights perspective. It helps governments break structural barriers that limit access to opportunities, strengthen the design and delivery of inclusive public policies, and implement projects that improve living conditions for people in situations of vulnerability. The DAR also builds the capacity of national institutions responsible for inclusion and social development, migration and forced displacement, and the protection of rights. It facilitates political dialogue to build consensus, set shared hemispheric priorities, and exchange experiences across countries.

About Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian, Director of the Department of Access and Rights, OAS



Role of Director of the DAR: Has served in this position since 2015 (formerly “Department of Social Inclusion”).

Career experience: has more than 20 years of experience at the OAS, where she served in various leadership positions, including that of Director of the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation. She holds a PhD in Political Science from Florida International University and a Master’s in International Relations from the University of South Florida. She is a Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and a founding member and coordinator of *Red de Polítologas No Sin Mujeres*, a network of women in political science.

About the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO):

Since 1962, the OAS has led 341 Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs) in 28 countries across the hemisphere, deploying more than 15,300 international observers. Additional achievements include the publication of a Methodology to observe the electoral participation of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples in electoral processes, which was first implemented in the EOM for the General Elections of Guatemala on September 6, 2015; an increase in the number of women as Heads of Electoral Observation Missions; and the Development of the First ISO International Electoral Standard (17582).

About Gerardo de Icaza, Director of the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation, OAS



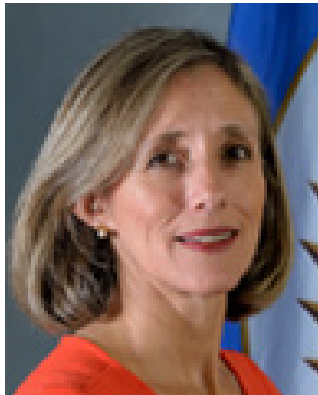
Role of Director of the DECO: Has served this position since March 1, 2014.

Career Experience: In 2018, he served as Acting Secretary for Strengthening of Democracy from February to July. Previously, at the National Electoral Institute of Mexico (INE) he served as Deputy Legal Director for Overseas Voting and as Coordinator of the Technical Committee of Specialists on Overseas Voting. He was a law clerk, and then Head of the International Affairs Unit in the Electoral Tribunal of Mexico. He studied Law and has a Master's Degree in International Relations and Communication. His publications include "International Law of Democracy" coordinated with Luis Almagro (former OAS SG) and “The Narrative of Fraud in Elections.”

About the Department for Effective Public Management (DGPE):

The DGPE contributes to the promotion and strengthening of the effective exercise of democracy in the region and focuses on: open and digital government; innovation in public management; civil identity; and capacity building through the OAS School of Governance. Its mission is to contribute to making public institutions in the region more transparent, effective and with mechanisms for citizen participation, recognizing that this is key to preventing corruption, reducing bureaucracy, improving investment and fostering innovation in the region.

About Maria Fernanda Trigo, Director of the Department for Effective Public Management, OAS



Role of Director of the DGPE: Has served in this position since 2012.

Career experience: Has worked at the OAS since 1999. Previously performed the functions of Deputy Director of the Department of Democratic Sustainability and Special Missions in the Political Affairs Secretariat where she led the development and implementation of a system for political analysis for the OAS General Secretariat. She was also part of the initial team of the Summit of the Americas Secretariat, supporting the preparation and negotiation process of the Declarations and Action Plans for the Quebec (2001), Monterrey (2004) and Mar del Plata (2006) Summits of the Americas.

Possible questions for the dialogue:

1. What institutional or governance challenges are currently having the greatest impact on the resilience of democratic systems in the Americas and the Caribbean?
2. Which policies and governance practices (e.g. institutional reforms, accountability structures, transparency measures, participation mechanisms) have proven most effective in strengthening democratic resilience at the national level? Which have been the hardest to implement?
3. What measures have proven most effective in ensuring that all citizens—including those historically under-represented—have meaningful access to governance and public decision-making, and where do gaps persist?
4. What strategies are helping ensure that the perspectives and priorities of younger generations are reflected in democratic processes, and what more can be done to engage youth as active contributors to democratic resilience?
5. How can the Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy and its Departments collaborate more closely with parliamentary actors to more effectively strengthen democratic resilience across member states?

Session 3: Protocolary meeting with his Excellence Ambassador Luis Ernesto Vargas, Chair of the Permanent Council of the OAS, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the OAS

Time: 13:45 - 14:30

Location: OAS Main Building (17th St. and Constitution Ave. NW)

About Ambassador Luis Ernesto Vargas, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the OAS and Chair of the Permanent Council



Role of Permanent Representative of Colombia to the OAS: Has been serving in this position since July 2022.

Role of Chair of the Permanent Council of the OAS: From January to March 2026.

Career experience: Has served as a judge in Colombia for decades. In 2008, he was nominated for the position of Magistrate of the Constitutional Court, where he presided the Special Monitoring Chamber and worked on judicial action regarding victims of forced displacement and sexual violence in the context of the armed conflict. In 2017, he assumed the position of commissioner of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, serving as rapporteur for the Rights of Migrants, Refugees and Victims of Trafficking in Persons until 2019. In 2022, he was appointed as an Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Colombia to the OAS.

Session 4: The Inter-American Democratic Charter at 25: Reaffirming a Hemispheric Commitment to Democracy and Human Rights – High-Level Dialogue with Representatives of Permanent Missions to the OAS

Time: 15:00 - 17:00

Location: Hall of the Americas, OAS Main Building (17th St. and Constitution Ave. NW)

Description of the session

Marking the 25th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, this high-level dialogue will convene parliamentarians and representatives of Permanent Missions to the OAS to reflect on the Charter's enduring relevance and the collective responsibility to advance its principles amid today's complex regional landscape. The session will provide space to examine contemporary governance pressures and evolving expectations of hemispheric cooperation, considering how a strengthened inter-American system—rooted in collaborative and resilient democracies—can foster regional security, inclusive and mutually beneficial development, and the well-being of all people.

Agenda

- Opening Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Luis Ernesto Vargas, Chair of the Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the OAS (5 minutes)
- Opening Remarks by Senator Ivan Flores García (Chile), President of ParlAmericas (5 mins)
- Introduction to frame the open dialogue by Sebastián Kraljevich, Secretary for Strengthening Democracy (3 minutes)
- Open dialogue moderated by Alisha Todd, Director General of ParlAmericas (see guiding questions below).

To foster a more fluid and inclusive dialogue, interventions will follow an alternating format:

- First, **four members** of the **ParlAmericas delegation** will speak (3 mins each).
 - Then, **four representatives** of the **Permanent Missions** will speak (3 mins each).
 - This pattern will repeat, alternating between **four members of the delegation** and **four representatives of the Missions** (3 mins each)
 - This pattern will repeat for a third round, alternating between **four members of the delegation** and **four representatives of the Missions** (3 mins each)
 - If time permits, a final round of **three parliamentarians** and **three Missions** (3 mins each)
- Closing reflections by H.E. Ambassador Claudia Escobar Mejía, Permanent Representative of Guatemala and Chair of the Voluntary Group of the OAS for the Follow-up of the Inter-American Democratic Charter (5 minutes)
 - Reception (following the conclusion of the session)

Guiding Question:

1. What is the continued relevance of the Inter-American Democratic Charter today, and which of its core principles require renewed attention in light of current democratic pressures across the hemisphere?
2. Looking toward the future of hemispheric cooperation, what opportunities exist to deepen collaboration between the OAS and parliamentary actors to ensure that the principles of the Inter-American Democratic Charter remain practical, relevant, and capable of serving all sectors of society?

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BRIEFING NOTES: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026

The following information provides an overview of the institutions and stakeholders with whom the delegation will meet, supporting informed and productive exchanges.

Session 5: Women, Peace and Security: Parliamentary Action for Inclusive and Sustainable Peace

Time: 09:00 - 10:00

Location: Rubén Darío Room – OAS General Services Building, 8th floor (1889 F Street NW, 20006)

Description of the session

This session will examine the Women, Peace and Security agenda as a critical dimension of democratic governance, sustainable peace, and inclusive development in the Americas and the Caribbean. Drawing on the expertise of the Inter-American Commission of Women, the discussion will engage parliamentarians in reflecting on how integrating a gender perspective into peace, security, and institutional responses strengthens democratic legitimacy, addresses multidimensional security challenges, and supports more equitable development outcomes. The dialogue will further explore the role of parliaments in advancing women's leadership and meaningful participation in security governance, and in aligning national legislative frameworks with hemispheric commitments.

About the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)

As established in its mandate, the mission of the Inter-American Commission for Women (CIM for its acronym in Spanish), as the hemispheric political forum for women's rights and gender equality, is to support the OAS Member States in their efforts to comply with their respective international and inter-American commitments on women's human rights and gender equity and equality, so that these can be translated into effective public policies, contributing to the full and equal participation of women in the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural spheres.

The CIM is made up of 34 delegates, one from each OAS Member State, appointed by their respective governments. These representatives meet every three years during the Assembly of Delegates to agree on the CIM's work plans and programs. Vision - CIM is the main generator of hemispheric policies that link public policy with international legal framework on human rights through dialogue between strategic sectors.

Relationship with ParlAmericas: CIM and ParlAmericas have an extensive and fruitful working relationship under a Letter of Understanding signed by both organizations in 2016. The Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) also serves as Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Task Force for Women's Leadership, of which ParlAmericas is a founding member (2018).

About Hilary Anderson, Senior Gender Specialist at the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)



Role of Senior Gender Specialist at the CIM: Has served in this position since 2009.

Career experience: Before joining the OAS, Ms. Anderson worked with the Pan American Health Organization's Gender and Health Unit and with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW, now part of UN Women). In 2009, she joined the staff of the CIM, where she works as a specialist on key women's issues in the region, including women's political representation, violence against women and economic citizenship. She is also a board member at the Women In International Security (WIIS) organization and holds a master's degree in Gender and Development Studies from McGill University.

Possible questions for the dialogue:

1. What are the main challenges to integrating a gender perspective into peace, security, and institutional responses, particularly in areas such as violence prevention, public security, and post-conflict or community resilience efforts?
2. What legislative frameworks, oversight mechanisms, or policy initiatives have proven most effective in strengthening women's participation and leadership in security governance?
3. What forms of cooperation with the Inter-American Commission of Women—such as comparative legislative guidance, technical assistance, or regional exchanges—could help parliaments advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda more effectively?

Session 6: Security and Institutional Cooperation: Insights from the Inter-American System

Time: 10:15 - 12:00

Location: Rubén Darío Room – OAS General Services Building, 8th floor (1889 F Street NW, 20006)

Description of the session

This session will offer parliamentarians an opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security (SMS) to examine the growing convergence of criminal threats in the hemisphere, as transnational organized crime networks increasingly operate across overlapping illicit markets — including drug trafficking, illicit firearms flows, illegal mining, human trafficking, and financial crimes. The discussion will focus on how the intersection of organized crime, illicit arms flows, and drug markets shapes these dynamics, and why integrated responses across the inter-American system are essential. Participants will also consider how OAS security bodies and inter-American instruments address these interconnected challenges, and how parliaments can strengthen their implementation at the national level.

Speakers:

- **Michael Bejos**, Officer in Charge, Department against Transnational Organized Crime, OAS
- **Pier Angelli De Luca**, Chief of Conventional Arms, Ammunition, and Explosives Section, Department of Public Security (DPS), OAS
- **Antonio Lomba**, Chief of the Institutional Strengthening Unit, Executive Secretariat of CICAD

About the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security at the OAS:

Created in 2005, the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security operates under a conception of security in the hemisphere that includes traditional threats, new threats, concerns and other challenges to the security of the States of the hemisphere. The SMS coordinates cooperation among member states to address threats to national and citizen security. Its work aims to mitigate the harmful impacts of these threats on the health and well-being of individuals and societies, while promoting prevention strategies related to the abuse of psychotropic substances, crime, and violence. The Secretariat advances these efforts through capacity-building initiatives, legal and legislative assistance, and the promotion of public health and education.

About the Department against Transnational Organized Crime (DTOC):

Created in 2016, the DTOC provides technical and legislative assistance to OAS member states to prevent and respond to transnational organized crime. It supports implementation of OAS mandates and compliance with the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, as well as the OAS Hemispheric Strategy against Transnational Organized Crime. The Department also serves as Technical Secretariat for OAS forums on these issues and promotes cooperation projects to strengthen investigative and prosecutorial capacity. Its work covers money laundering, corruption and asset

recovery, trafficking in persons, migrant smuggling, illicit firearms, environmental crime, cybercrime, and illicit economies, including emerging issues such as cryptocurrencies and AI.

About Michael Bejos, Officer in Charge, Department against Transnational Organized Crime (DTCO):



Role within the DTCO: Has served in the Department since 2016, first as Senior Officer and then as Officer in Charge.

Career experience: A Belizean national, Mr. Bejos joined the OAS following a 15-year career in the Belizean Foreign Service, with tours of duty in Guatemala, Taiwan, Washington D.C. and Mexico, as well as in various domestic assignments. Mr. Bejos joined the OAS staff in 2009 and has previously served as Technical Secretary for the InterAmerican Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), OAS Representative in Dominica, and as Senior Officer at the Department of Public Security. He holds a Master’s Degree in Diplomacy from the University of Costa Rica and a Postgraduate Diploma in Diplomatic Studies from Oxford University.

About the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA)

CIFTA is the OAS’s main binding framework to address illicit firearms proliferation through coordinated, transnational cooperation. Adopted in 1997, it was the first regional instrument of its kind and has been ratified by 31 of 34 OAS member states. CIFTA requires states to criminalize illicit manufacturing and trafficking, mark firearms, establish licensing for export, import, and transit, and strengthen controls at export points. Its governance includes a Conference of States Parties, an annual Consultative Committee, and an OAS Technical Secretariat.

About Pier Angelli De Luca, Chief of Conventional Arms, Ammunition, and Explosives Section, Department of Public Security (DPS)



Role within the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security: Has served at the Secretariat since 2015.

Career experience: Pier Angelli de Luca Maciel is a Brazilian lawyer and specialist in disarmament and public security. She has served as a specialist for the Program of Assistance on Control of Arms and Munition, at the Department of Public Security of the Organization. She holds a Master’s degree in Criminology at the University of Ottawa.

About the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)

Created in 1986, CICAD is the OAS' consultative and advisory body on drug-related issues, providing a forum for member states to exchange experiences, develop cooperative solutions, and receive technical assistance to strengthen national and regional responses. CICAD supports implementation of the OAS Hemispheric Drug Strategy (2020) and the Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs (2021–2025), promoting evidence-based policy grounded in human rights and informed by development perspectives. Its work includes research, evaluations, capacity-building, and training, delivered through national and regional projects and partnerships with UN agencies, PAHO, CARICOM, and civil society.

About Antonio Lomba, Chief of the Institutional Strengthening Unit, Executive Secretariat of CICAD



Role of Chief of the Institutional Strengthening Unit: Has served in this position since 2013.

Career experience: A specialist in public policy and institutional development, Mr. Lomba has almost 30 years of international experience. He entered the OAS in 2005 as a Money Laundering and Demand Reduction Curriculum Development Consultant, and has since served in many leadership roles in the Organization, including that of manager of the Alternatives to Incarceration and the EU-LAC Drug City Partnership programs. He holds Master's degrees in Public Policy and Democracy and in Business Administration, and is a PhD candidate in Criminology at Ghent University.

Possible questions for the dialogue:

1. Which integrated policy approaches or security frameworks have proven most effective in addressing the intersection of organized crime, illicit arms flows, and drug markets at the national and regional levels? Which elements of these approaches remain the most difficult to implement in practice?
2. **What approaches have proven most effective in ensuring that all individuals—regardless of their different roles, experiences, or vulnerabilities—benefit equally from national and regional security policies, and where do gaps remain in addressing the safety needs of different groups?**
3. How can OAS security bodies and inter-American instruments—such as existing conventions, agreements, and technical cooperation mechanisms—be better leveraged to confront transnational criminal networks operating across overlapping illicit markets? Where are the current gaps in implementation, enforcement, or coordination?

(see next page for more questions)

4. What specific legislative or oversight tools can parliaments use to strengthen national compliance with inter-American security instruments, particularly those related to illicit firearms control, financial crime prevention, and counter-trafficking efforts?
5. What models of cross-border, interagency, or multi-sector collaboration have yielded the strongest results in disrupting interconnected criminal economies? How can these be scaled across the hemisphere?
6. What measures have proven most effective in enhancing intelligence-sharing and joint investigations among member states to address criminal networks operating simultaneously in drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal mining, and human trafficking markets? Where do the most significant information-sharing gaps persist?
7. How are criminal networks adapting to shifts in illicit markets—such as synthetic drug production, new financial crime methods, or evolving trafficking routes—and what strategies can parliamentarians prioritize to address these emerging threats proactively?
8. What capacity-building initiatives from the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security have had the most significant impact on member states' abilities to prevent and combat transnational organized crime? What additional technical support or institutional strengthening is most urgently needed?
9. How does the convergence of drug markets, arms trafficking, and other illicit economies impact community-level violence, and what evidence-based prevention and public-security strategies can parliaments support to improve citizen safety?
10. How can the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security and its Departments collaborate more closely with parliamentary actors to reinforce integrated, whole-of-government responses to transnational crime and enhance oversight of national security commitments?

Session 7: Legislative Dialogue on delivering shared prosperity in the Western Hemisphere

Time: 14:30 - 16:00

Location: U.S. Congress (Washington, DC 20004, USA)

Description of the session

Organized in collaboration with the U.S. Congress House Democracy Partnership, this session will provide delegates with an opportunity to engage with Members of the United States House of Representatives to exchange perspectives on regional priorities for economic growth and resilience, and to discuss ways to reinforce democracy and good governance while promoting shared prosperity, security, and social well-being across the region.



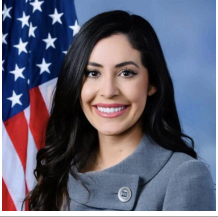

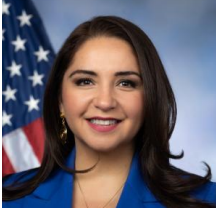
Guiding Questions for the Dialogue:

1. From your country's perspective, what are the most pressing priorities for advancing security, economic growth and resilience in the Hemisphere?
2. What areas of inter-American cooperation—whether related to economic competitiveness, democratic reforms, security, or social development—could most benefit from sustained parliamentary engagement and shared commitments?
3. To the U.S. Members: Given the strong demographic, economic, and cultural links between many U.S. districts and communities in Latin America and the Caribbean, how can ongoing peer-to-peer dialogue such as today's exchange translate into meaningful benefits for constituents and deepen regional cooperation?

About the House Democracy Partnership

The House Democracy Partnership (HDP), a bipartisan commission of the U.S. House of Representatives, works to advance U.S. economic and security interests by promoting accountable, transparent, and effective legislative governance in partner countries. Through peer-to-peer exchanges between Members of Congress and international counterparts, HDP supports legislative capacity-building and cooperation with legislatures worldwide. As a special commission in the U.S. Congress that has a mandate to support parliamentary diplomacy, HDP now serves as the primary focal point for cooperation between ParlAmericas and the U.S. Congress. In recent years this has included this dialogue session within the framework of ParlAmericas' annual delegation to Washington, as well as joint programming on Digital Economy in the Caribbean.

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives meeting with the delegation

	<p>Representative Dina Titus (D-NV), United States House of Representatives Representative for Nevada’s 1st District since 2013, she is the Ranking Member of the House Democracy Partnership Commission. She serves on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, where she is the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials. Additionally, she is a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.</p>
	<p>Representative Darin Lahood (R-IL), United States House of Representatives Representative for Illinois since 2015 (18th district, 2015–2023; 16th district, 2023–present), he is a former Chairman of the House Democracy Partnership Commission. He serves on the House Committee on Ways and Means, where he is the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Work and Welfare and a member of the Subcommittee on Trade.</p>
	<p>Representative Ana Paulina Luna (R-FL), United States House of Representatives Representative for Florida’s 13th district since 2023, she serves on the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Committee on Foreign Affairs, where she is a member of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Intelligence. She is also the Chairwoman of the Task Force on the Declassification of Federal Secrets.</p>
	<p>Representative Norma Torres (D-CA), United States House of Representatives Representative for California’s 35th district since 2017, she serves on the Committee on House Appropriations, as well as on its Subcommittees on Elections, and she is the Ranking Member on its Subcommittee on Oversight. She is also Chair of the Central America Caucus and the New Americans Caucus.</p>
	<p>Representative Delia Ramirez (D-IL), United States House of Representatives Representative for Illinois’s 3rd district since 2023, she serves on the House Committee on Homeland Security. Additionally, she serves on the House Committee for Veterans Affairs, and she is the Ranking Member on its Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, and serves on the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.</p>

BRIEFING NOTES: THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026

The following information provides an overview of the institutions and stakeholders with whom the delegation will meet, supporting informed and productive exchanges.

Session 8: Technical Briefing: Haitian-led Roadmap for Stability and Peace with Regional and International Support

Time: 09:00 - 10:00

Location: Guerrero Room – OAS Main Building (17th St. and Constitution Ave. NW)

Description of the session

This session will provide an opportunity for parliamentarians to learn about the [Haitian-led Roadmap for Stability and Peace with Regional and International Support](#), including the conditions necessary for its effective implementation. It will also provide a space to exchange perspectives on how parliamentary diplomacy can complement this coordinated multilateral effort within the Inter-American system to support stability and peace in Haiti.

Speakers:

- **Ambassador Jean Josué Pierre**, Permanent Representative of Haiti to the OAS
- **Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian**, Director of the Department of Access and Rights, OAS
(Note: Ms. Muñoz-Pogossian also presented during the Democracy session, her bio note is included on p.19 of this briefing book).

About Ambassador Jean Josué Pierre, Permanent Representative of Haiti to the OAS



Role of Permanent Representative of Haiti to the OAS: Has served in this position since January 2026.

Career experience: Mr. Jean Josué Pierre is a Haitian career diplomat with extensive experience in his country's foreign service. He has served in Haitian diplomatic missions abroad, including postings in France and Switzerland, and has held senior positions within Haiti's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

About the Haitian-led Roadmap for Stability and Peace with Regional and International Support

Haiti is facing a crisis of exceptional scale, marked by the expansion of armed gang control across large parts of the country, soaring homicide and crime rates, mass displacement, and the near-collapse of essential public services. Nearly half the population is food insecure, and unemployment exceeds 40%, deepening the humanitarian emergency.

In response, and under the leadership of Secretary General Albert Ramdin, the Organization of American States (OAS) is advancing a Haitian-led framework to restore stability, rebuild core institutions, and support Haiti's return to constitutional order. The roadmap responds to a [June 2025 mandate](#) from OAS member states to produce a consolidated strategy encompassing security, political transition, elections, humanitarian response, and development.

The OAS emphasizes that this roadmap does not replace existing international initiatives. Rather, it seeks to align parallel efforts into a single coordinated strategy centered on Haitian leadership and national ownership, with international partners supporting priorities defined by Haitian authorities.

The framework places strong emphasis on community engagement, particularly with women, youth, and people in vulnerable situations, recognizing that durable progress depends on rebuilding trust at the local level. A rights-based approach underpins all activities, alongside accountability mechanisms intended to strengthen transparency and reinforce the rule of law.

Implementation is organized around five interlinked pillars:

1. **Security Stabilization and Peace Restoration** focuses on securing humanitarian corridors, strengthening the Haitian National Police, reforming the justice system, and dismantling criminal groups. The OAS contributes through its SECURE-Haiti program, coordinated with the UN security presence.
2. **Political Consensus and Governance Support** aims to prevent governance vacuums and advance inclusive dialogue on future governance arrangements and a draft constitution. CARICOM leads political facilitation, while the OAS provides coordination, technical assistance, and engagement with international partners.
3. **Electoral Process and Institutional Legitimacy** centers on strengthening electoral institutions, expanding voter registration, and preparing international observation. The OAS is assembling an Electoral Experts Mission, to deploy once minimum security and operational conditions are met.
4. **Humanitarian Response** prioritizes food security, water and sanitation, health services, emergency education, shelter, community resilience, and protection needs, including responses to gender-based violence and child protection.
5. **Sustainable Development and Economic** progress addresses restoration of basic services, job creation, and infrastructure development, including energy and digital connectivity. Financing for this pillar is led by the Inter-American Development Bank, with the OAS supporting coordination.

Oversight is provided through a Coordinating Group Mechanism involving the Government of Haiti, the OAS, CARICOM, and the UN. The OAS is also establishing an internal interdepartmental working group and may appoint a Special Representative for Haiti to coordinate donor engagement and support Haitian authorities. Additionally, a Roadmap Dashboard is being developed to track progress and align external financing. Total projected funding needs are estimated at approximately USD 2.6 billion.

Possible questions for the dialogue:

1. What are the most critical conditions required to support the effective implementation of the Haitian-led Roadmap for Stability and Peace, and where have you seen so far the most significant obstacles to progress?
2. In light of these challenges, what institutional coordination measures—considering national and regional stakeholders—are most important to sustain the roadmap’s implementation and reinforce efforts to restore stability and democratic governance?
3. What concrete measures —such as collaboration with civil society or public needs assessments— have been adopted to ensure that the Roadmap's design and implementation effectively meet all citizens' needs, recognizing diverse social and economic impacts experienced by the population?
4. Data has demonstrated that women and girls are among those most significantly affected by the crisis in Haiti, evidenced by the devastating rates of sexual violence, disproportionate impacts from food insecurity and internal displacement, among other factors. How are these realities being addressed in the Roadmap, and how are women being meaningfully incorporated into decision making processes?

Session 9: Inter-Parliamentary Exchange with His Excellency Albert Ramdin, Secretary General of the Organization of American States

Time: 10:00 - 11:00

Location: Guerrero Room – OAS Main Building (17th St. and Constitution Ave. NW)

Description of the session

This meeting will provide an opportunity to dialogue with the Secretary General on his priorities for the OAS and to articulate parliamentary views on regional issues where strengthened OAS engagement would be beneficial.

About Albert Ramdin, Secretary General of the OAS



Role of OAS Secretary General: Elected on March 10, 2025, SG Ramdin started his five-year mandate as Secretary General on May 26, 2025 – becoming the first person from a CARICOM country to hold the role.

Languages: Dutch, English, and Spanish

Career experience: Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation of the Republic of Suriname from July 2020 - May 2025. Chairman of the executive council of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) between 2023 and 2024. Chairman of the

Caribbean Development and Cooperation Council of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ELAC) from 2022 to 2024. Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States (2 consecutive terms; July 2005 - July 2015). In 1997, he was appointed Suriname's Permanent Representative to the OAS, serving as Chair of the Permanent Council (January-March 1998) and Chair of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (1999). He has also worked in the private sector on topics of strategic trade and business facilitation, and project management.

Associated initiatives in Suriname as Minister: Under his tenure, Suriname engaged with regional and global partners and promoted policies for sustainable development and democratic strengthening. SG Ramdin made an official visit to the Netherlands early in his tenure, the first such visit by a Surinamese cabinet member in a decade.

Priorities as OAS Secretary General: SG Ramdin pledged, upon taking office, to lead a Secretariat that is "closer to the people," ensuring that the organization becomes more socially impactful. In other instances, he has also emphasized the need for the institution to regain relevance at this critical moment for the region by taking a consensus-based approach and fighting the region's political polarization.

He plans to reform the organization in three main areas: member state engagement and regional unity, internal restructuring, and functional collaboration with inter-American actors and the private sector. A central theme of his administration is to reshape the OAS into a more agile, transparent, and service-oriented institution, and to effectively support its member states in tackling current and emerging challenges.

Calling for "an OAS that works equally for all its members," SG Ramdin expressed that a priority of his mandate will be to respond to the needs of small and vulnerable states, especially in the Caribbean and Central America.

Initiatives as OAS Secretary General:

- **Haiti:** As one of his first steps as Secretary General, SG Ramdin relaunched the Group of Friends Haiti – a platform to facilitate greater coordination and alignment of efforts to better respond to the urgent critical situation in Haiti. In August 2025, SG Ramdin presented the updated Haiti Roadmap – *Towards a Haitian-Led Roadmap for Stability and Peace with Regional and International Support*, – which sets security as the enabling condition for the stabilization, good governance, and efficient international support in Haiti. The Roadmap "will support Haitian-led efforts to address the root causes and drivers of violence, weak democratic institutions, corruption, poverty, and persistent striking social inequalities, as well as limited access to education and essential public services."
- **Greater visibility of OAS's projects:** Resonating with his statement on leading a Secretariat "closer to the people," SG Ramdin's Proposed 2026 Budget has given greater emphasis to the enhancement of "the visibility of the projects, programs and initiatives being implemented by the OAS." – including through the renovation and improvement of the organization's website and communications.

Possible questions for the dialogue:

1. In the current hemispheric context, where do you see the greatest opportunities for the OAS to reinforce dialogue and cooperation among member states in support of stability, development, and democratic governance?
2. Your mandate, although recent, has been marked by a significant reform of the Organization's structure. How will this new arrangement promote parliaments and parliamentary diplomacy contribution to advancing the Organization's priorities and to reinforcing collaboration between national legislatures and the inter-American system?
3. In a time of significant economic and political transformation for the hemisphere, how is the OAS maintaining a priority focus on human rights, equality, and inclusion and reaffirming these as integral components of democracy and development?

Session 10: Transforming Mental Health in the Americas through Inter-American Cooperation

Time: 11:30 - 13:00

Location: Rubén Darío Room – OAS General Services Building, 8th floor (1889 F Street NW, 20006)

Description of the session

Furthering the goals of the 2025 OAS Resolution "Addressing the Critical Mental Health Crises in the Americas," this session will update parliamentarians on the Inter-American working group supporting its implementation and facilitate a discussion on the social determinants shaping mental health outcomes, the intersections between mental health and other priority social development agendas, and how integrated, rights-based approaches can strengthen access, resilience, and wellbeing.

Speakers:

- **Dr. Renato Oliveira e Souza**, Chief of the Mental Health and Substance Use Unit, PAHO/WHO
- **Ciro Leal Martins da Cunha**, Minister, Alternate Representative, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the OAS
- **Joy-Dee Davis-Lake**, Minister-Counselor, Alternate Representative, Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda to the OAS
- **Sara Mia Noguera**, Head of the Equity Promotion Section, Department of Access and Rights, OAS

About the Pan American Health Organization:

The Pan American Health Organization of the World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) is the international public health agency of the Americas. It works daily with countries in the region to improve and protect the health of their populations. PAHO/WHO provides technical cooperation in health to its 35 member states, strengthening health systems and responding to emergencies and disasters. It collaborates with ministries of health, other government agencies, civil society organizations, international agencies, universities, social security organizations, community groups, and other partners.

About the Inter-American Working Group on Mental Health:

The Inter-American Working Group on Mental Health is an intergovernmental coordination mechanism established by the OAS General Assembly (AG/RES. 3036 (LV-O/25)) to bring together Member States, agencies of the Inter-American system, and relevant international partners to develop a regional action plan and strengthen cooperation to address the mental health crisis in the Americas, in alignment with the PAHO Strategy for Improving Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in the Region. **The Group is currently chaired by Brazil, with Antigua and Barbuda serving as Vice Chair.**

About Dr. Renato Oliveira e Souza, Chief of the Mental Health and Substance Use Unit, PAHO



Role of Chief of the Mental Health and Substance Use Unit: Has served in this position since 2020.

Career experience: Dr. Renato Oliveira e Souza is a psychiatrist and public health specialist focused on strengthening mental health systems across the Americas. Earlier in his career, he worked with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), including in senior mental health advisory roles, contributing to mental health and psychosocial support in complex and humanitarian settings. He also worked for the International Committee of the Red Cross and served as Mental Health Consultant for the WHO. He holds a postgraduate diploma in forensic psychiatry at King's College London, and completed an MSc in epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

About Ciro Leal Martins da Cunha, Minister, Alternate Representative, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the OAS



Role of Alternate Representative: Has served in this position since 2021.

Career experience: Ciro Leal Martins da Cunha is a Brazilian diplomat. He holds a Master's degree in Diplomacy from Instituto Rio Branco and a PhD from Maastricht University's Faculty of Law. His PhD research focused on alcohol control regimes. His professional experience includes work on WTO trade disputes, multilateral negotiations (including UN-related arenas), regional integration in South America, and international terrorism, as well as roles connected to international affairs in Brazil's public institutions.

About Joy-Dee Davis-Lake, Minister-Counselor, Alternate Representative, Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda to the OAS



Role of Alternate Representative: Has served in this position since 2006.

Career experience: Joy-Dee Davis-Lake is a diplomat from Antigua and Barbuda. Throughout her 20-years long career in the OAS, she has held various leadership roles, including serving as Chair of the OAS Working Group established to prepare an Inter-American convention addressing racism and related forms of intolerance. She has also supported the Summits of the Americas process as an Assistant National Coordinator. She holds a Master’s degree in Law and Diplomacy from Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, with a focus on public international law, international negotiations, and conflict resolution.

About Sara Mia Noguera, Head of the Equity Promotion Section, Department of Access and Rights, OAS



Role of Head of the Equity Promotion Section: Has served in this position since 2016.

Career experience: Sara Mia Noguera has over 20 years of experience working on issues related to strengthening democracy, gender mainstreaming, human rights, and development cooperation. She has coordinated and co-authored several publications on topics including trafficking in persons, multidimensional poverty, and electoral observation missions. She has also worked at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR. In her current role, she leads the social development portfolio of the DAR/OAS, including the Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Social Development, the InterAmerican Social Protection

Network (IASPN) and the mechanism that monitors countries' progress in guaranteeing the rights contained in the Protocol of San Salvador. She holds a master’s degree in International Law and Human Rights from the United Nations University for Peace.

Possible questions for the dialogue:

1. Which integrated, community-based mental health models have been most effective across the region, according to OAS and PAHO evidence, and what are the main barriers preventing countries from scaling them?
2. Which social determinants—poverty, discrimination, violence, displacement, climate impacts—are most urgently shaping mental-health outcomes in the Americas and the Caribbean, and what upstream policy actions do OAS and PAHO view as the highest impact for legislatures?

(see next page for more questions)

3. Where do the largest inequities persist—particularly for Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, migrants, women, youth, LGBTQI+ persons, and people with disabilities—and what targeted, evidence-based interventions should parliaments support to address these?
4. What legal or institutional reforms are most urgently needed to shift away from coercive or stigmatizing practices and toward rights-based, community-anchored mental health systems?
5. Which cross-sector approaches—linking mental health with education, housing, labour, justice, and climate adaptation—have shown measurable improvements, and how can OAS and PAHO support member states to implement them?
6. Given the region’s severe shortage of mental health professionals, what strategies—such as task-sharing, digital health, and culturally competent training—does PAHO recommend for rapid scale-up, and how should parliaments regulate and support this expansion?
7. How can countries improve national data systems for mental health—including minimum datasets, indicators, and privacy safeguards—and what OAS and PAHO tools exist to support harmonized, comparable data collection?
8. What financing strategies or legislative mechanisms have been most effective in sustaining community-based and preventative mental health services, and how should parliaments strengthen budget oversight?
9. How can parliamentarians and ParlAmericas more actively collaborate with the Inter-American Working Group—through dialogue, joint monitoring, or model legislation—to strengthen long-term, region-wide implementation?

Session 11: Economic Development and Labour in the Americas and the Caribbean

Time: 14:00 - 16:00

Location: Rubén Darío Room – OAS General Services Building, 8th floor (1889 F Street NW, 20006)

Description of the session

The Inter American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2026. CIDI is the main OAS body that advances hemispheric cooperation on economic, human, and sustainable development. This session will provide an overview on the main policy and regional development imperatives in the context of CIDI where collaboration with parliaments can foster prosperity in the Americas. Special emphasis will be placed on economic development areas such as trade, SMEs and innovation, as well as on Labor issues, including structural and emerging employment challenges in the region.

Context

In the current regional context, countries face both persistent and emerging development challenges. These include the need to accelerate productivity and economic diversification, support competitiveness and promote innovation-driven development. At the same time, labor markets are undergoing profound transformations driven by digital transformation, demographic shifts, and evolving patterns of work. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated policy responses that foster job creation, strengthen workforce skills, and support more inclusive and resilient labor markets.

Parliaments play a key role in shaping the policy and regulatory frameworks that enable economic opportunity and social mobility. Through legislation, oversight, and dialogue with governments and stakeholders, parliamentarians can help advance policies that support entrepreneurship, workforce development, and innovation ecosystems. Strengthening collaboration between the executive and legislative branches at the regional level can therefore contribute significantly to advancing shared development priorities in the hemisphere.

Guiding questions:

- In what ways can hemispheric cooperation platforms such as CIDI support national efforts to foster economic growth and employment?
- What policy measures can strengthen competitiveness and entrepreneurship as engines of job creation and economic growth in the Americas?
- How can countries adequately prepare their workforce for the changing nature of work, including technological transformation and the rise of new industries?
- How can parliaments contribute to advancing policies that promote innovation, competitiveness, productivity, and inclusive labor markets?

Speakers:

- **H.E. Ambassador Edison Lanza**, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the OAS; Chair of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development
- **Dr. Barbara Kotschwar**, Officer in Charge, Executive Secretariat for Integral Development, Director, Department of Economic Development, OAS
- **Cesar Parga**, Section Chief, Competitiveness, Innovation and Technology, Department of Economic Development, OAS-SEDI
- **Maria Claudia Camacho**, Section Chief, Labor and Employment, Department of Human Development, Employment and Education, OAS-SEDI

About the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI)

CIDI serves as the principal forum within the OAS for policy dialogue and decision-making on partnerships for integral development, promoting comprehensive progress across its social, economic, and sustainable dimensions. Through nine ministerial and high-level meetings dedicated to development issues, CIDI brings together member states to advance consultative approaches to hemispheric policy formulation and decision-making, encouraging intersectoral contributions in support of development.

About H.E. Ambassador Edison Lanza, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the OAS



Role of Chair of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development:

From January to June 2026.

Role of Permanent Representative of Uruguay: Has served in this position since August 2025.

Career experience: Ambassador Lanza served as Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights from 2014 to 2020. He is a co-founder of the Center for Archives and Access to Public Information, and co-founder of the Media and Society Group. He has been a professor or guest expert at various universities and academic projects such as Columbia University, University of Texas, the American University, Carlos III University of Madrid, the National Autonomous University of Mexico, among others. He holds a PhD in Law and Social Sciences from the University of the Republic (Uruguay).

About the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI)

The Executive Secretariat for Integral Development serves as the Technical Secretariat of CIDI. Through regional policy dialogue and the implementation of mandates, SEDI provides technical assistance and fosters development cooperation initiatives that strengthen the institutional and human capacities in key areas such as education, employment, competitiveness, innovation, natural resource management, and climate action.

About Barbara Kotschwar, Officer in Charge of the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development



Role of Officer in Charge of the SEDI: Has served in this position since October 2025.

Career experience: A senior economist with more than 20 years of experience in economic development, Ms. Kotschwar is an Adjunct Professor of Latin American Studies and Economics at Georgetown University, where she has taught political economy and trade and integration in the Americas since 1998. She has also held senior roles across companies, global organizations, and leading think tanks, most recently serving as Executive Director of the Visa Economic Empowerment Institute. Her previous experience includes leading the World Bank's portfolio on

international investment agreements and heading the OAS Foreign Trade Information Section in support of the Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations. She has advised governments and international organizations worldwide, including the Inter-American Development Bank, OAS, United Nations, World Bank, and World Trade Organization.

About Cesar Parga, Section Chief, Competitiveness, Innovation and Technology, Department of Economic Development, OAS-SEDI



Career experience: Has been serving in the OAS since 2000. Cesar has more than 20 years of experience leading partnership initiatives, capacity-building programs, country missions, and private sector development projects across more than 25 countries. He currently guides several regional initiatives, including the Americas Competitiveness Exchange (ACE), the Network of Centers of Excellence, and the OAS Youth Academy on Transformative Technologies. Cesar holds a law degree from the University of Guadalajara in Mexico, a master's degree in international law and intellectual property from The George Washington University Law School, and a postgraduate certificate in international trade from the University Institute of European Studies in Italy. He served as an adjunct professor of law at Georgetown

Law, teaching international trade from 2008 to 2019, and was a visiting researcher at the National University of Singapore.

About Maria Claudia Camacho, Section Chief, Labor and Employment, Department of Human Development, Employment and Education, OAS-SEDI



Role of Section Chief, Labor and Employment, Department of Human Development, Employment and Education, OAS-SEDI: Has been serving in this position since 2015.

Career experience: María Claudia Camacho currently leads regional initiatives that support governments in designing and implementing policies to promote decent work, strengthen labor markets, and expand employment opportunities across the Americas. Her work involves collaboration with governments, workers’ organizations, and employers to address labor challenges and advance inclusive economic development in the region. Camacho is an economist and lawyer from Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá. She holds a Master’s degree in International Development from George Washington University and a Master of Public Administration from Columbia University. Over the course of her career, she has worked with governments and international organizations on labor policy, youth employment, and workforce inclusion, and has contributed to research and policy discussions on employment, inequality, and education-to-work transitions in the Americas.

Possible questions for the dialogue:

1. Which integrated economic development or SME support models across the region have shown the strongest results in boosting productivity, diversification, and innovation—and what barriers are most preventing countries from scaling these approaches?
2. What structural economic determinants—such as inequality, low productivity, limited access to capital, informality, and digital divides—are most urgently shaping development outcomes in the Americas and the Caribbean, and what upstream policy interventions does SEDI view as the highest priority for legislatures?
3. What regional data or models demonstrate the social, economic and productivity gains of investing in the care economy, and how can parliaments use this evidence to shape funding, incentives, and regulatory frameworks that expand affordable, high-quality care services?
4. Where do the most significant equity gaps persist for women, youth, Indigenous and Afro-descendant entrepreneurs, migrants, and workers in informal sectors—and what targeted, evidence-based policies should parliaments support to close these gaps in economic participation and job quality?
5. What legal or institutional reforms are most urgently needed to create inclusive enabling environments for entrepreneurship, innovation, formalization, and labour market participation—particularly for SMEs and emerging industries?

(see next page for more questions)

6. Given rapid technological shifts and demographic changes, what workforce development strategies—such as lifelong learning, reskilling, apprenticeships, and digital skills ecosystems—does the OAS recommend for rapid labour market adaptation, and how should parliaments regulate and support their expansion?
7. What emerging economic and labour market disruptions—AI, automation, green transition industries, demographic ageing, new service-sector models—should legislatures be prioritizing now, and what specific guidance can CIDI and SEDI provide for future-proofing national development strategies?

ANNEX: The Structure of the OAS

The Organization of American States accomplishes its purposes by means of the following:

- The General Assembly;
- the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs;
- the Councils (the Permanent Council and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development);
- the Inter-American Juridical Committee;
- the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
- the General Secretariat;
- the specialized conferences;
- the specialized organizations; and
- other entities established by the General Assembly.

The General Assembly is the supreme organ of the Organization of American States and comprises the delegations of all the member states. All member states are represented at the General Assembly and have the right to one vote.

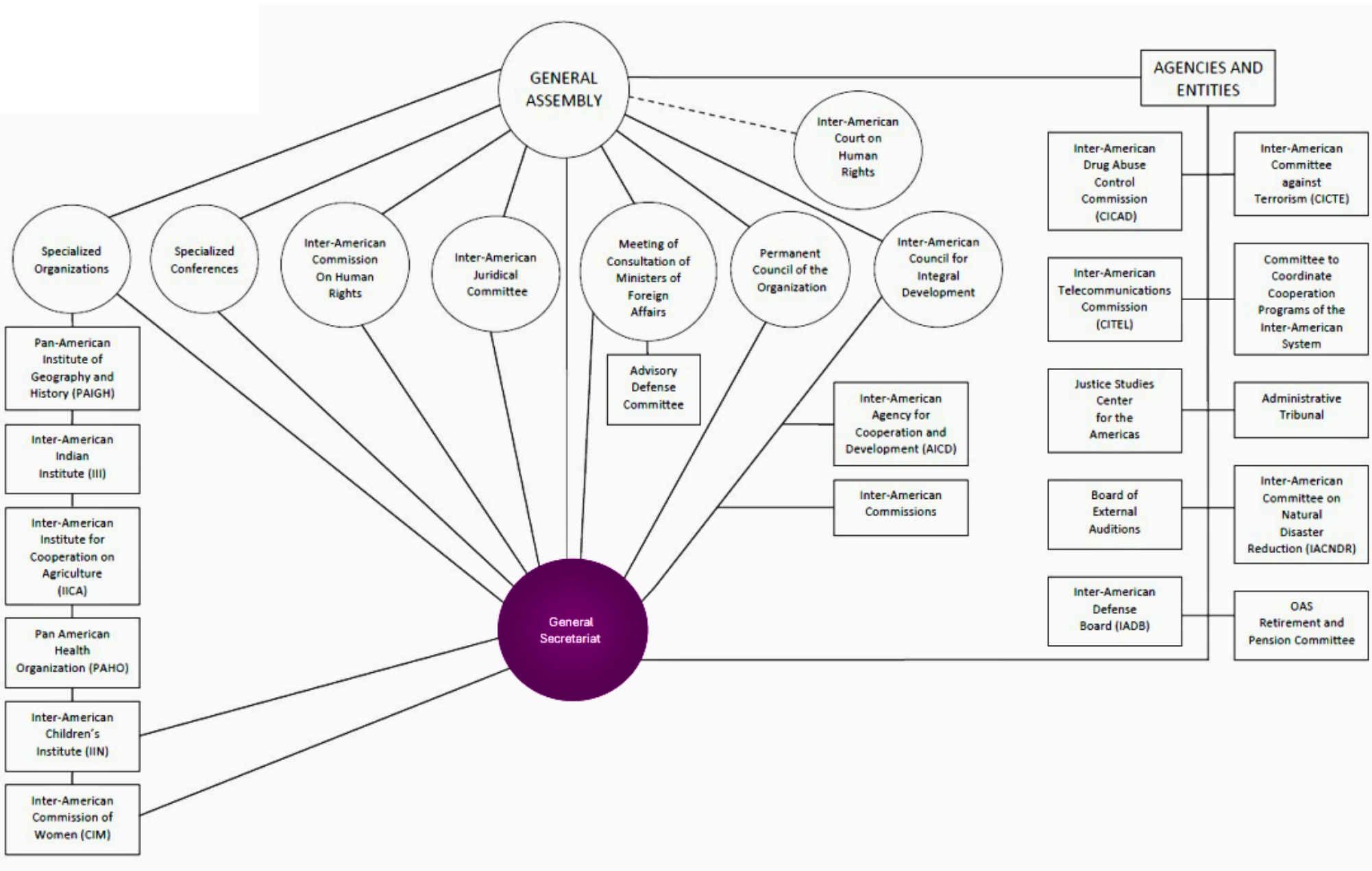
The Permanent Council attends to the matters entrusted to it by the General Assembly or the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs; monitors the maintenance of friendly relations among the member states and the observance of the standards governing General Secretariat operations; and acts provisionally as Organ of Consultation under the Rio Treaty.

General Secretariat

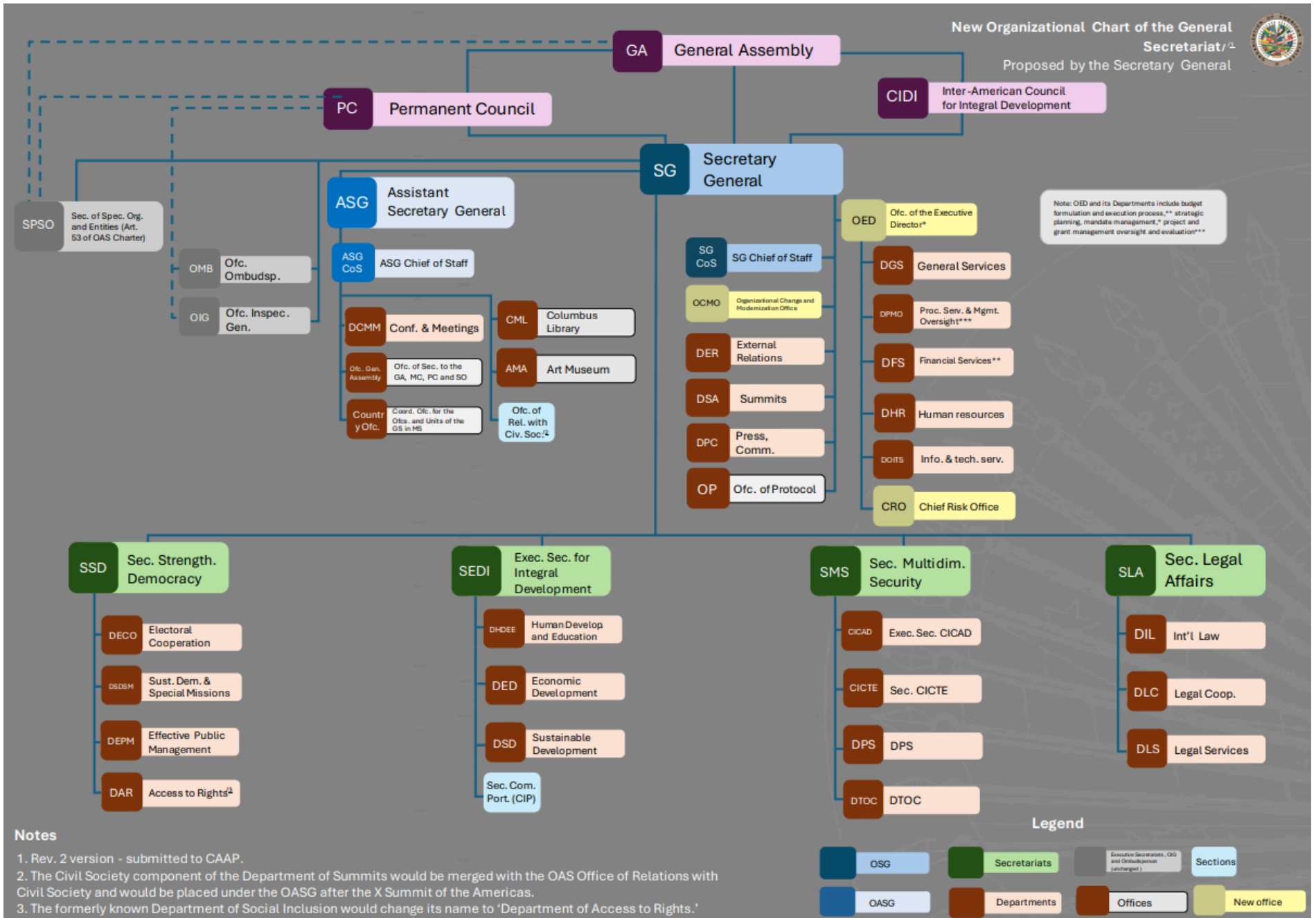
The General Secretariat is the central and permanent organ of the Organization of American States. It shall perform the functions assigned to it in the Charter, in other inter-American treaties and agreements, and by the General Assembly, and shall carry out the duties entrusted to it by the General Assembly, the Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, or the Councils.

Following the proposals of Secretary General Albert Ramdin, the Permanent Council approved, in August 2025, the restructuring of the General Secretariat through resolution CP/RES. 1289/25. According to the new structure, the work of the General Secretariat is carried out through five major dependencies: the Office of the Executive Director, the Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy (SSD), the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI), the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security (SMS), and the Secretariat for Legal Affairs (SLA).

Organization Chart of the Organization of American States (since August 2025)



New Organization Chart of the General Secretariat



Notes

1. Rev. 2 version - submitted to CAAP.
2. The Civil Society component of the Department of Summits would be merged with the OAS Office of Relations with Civil Society and would be placed under the OASG after the X Summit of the Americas.
3. The formerly known Department of Social Inclusion would change its name to 'Department of Access to Rights.'