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CONSIDERATIONS ON THE HOLDING OF VIRTUAL MEETINGS OF THE

INTER-AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT

AND IT’S SUBSIDIARY BODIES

(Document presented by the Chair)

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Given the essential role that the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) should undertake to support member states in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and the long-term impact it would have on all aspects of the lives of the citizens of the Americas, the Chair is pleased to present the following considerations that require the attention of member states to agree on the holding of regular and special meetings of CIDI and its subsidiary organs in virtual format.

These considerations are consistent with the existing institutional legal framework and would apply to the regular and special meetings of CIDI referred to in Article 24 and to the Committees as set out in Chapter VIII of the Rules of Procedure for Regular and Special Meetings of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development.

If under the current circumstances, the need for a regular or special CIDI meeting at ministerial or equivalent level, as set for in Article 11 of the above-mentioned Rules of Procedure, is identified, member states will review the procedures to be applied.

**I. Legal perspective**

Based on the measures adopted by the Permanent Council, virtual meetings of CIDI and its subsidiary bodies would not differ in respect of the application of standing rules of procedure of meetings held under normal circumstances in which delegates of the member states are physically present, aside from the use of technology to facilitate the process in the absence of said physical presence.

The current regulatory standards will be applied without the need for amendment thus allowing for continuity of work. CIDI will use its discretionary regulatory authority to decide on its own working methods and those of other bodies, and the Chair of CIDI will exercise his/her prerogative to convene meetings of said body.

The following procedures and mechanisms outline the format and methodology by which CIDI can continue its work to produce substantive decisions via a new platform for meeting remotely given the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the holding of traditional meetings.

**II. Procedures**

* Meetings of CIDI and its subsidiary bodies shall be convened virtually, until local restrictions on such gatherings are lifted, with priority given to meetings to consider urgent matters and issues relating to the present crisis.
  + All virtual meetings of CIDI and/or its committees shall follow the rules of procedure, in particular:
    - Only accredited representatives, alternates or advisers will participate on behalf of member states (Articles 27);
    - Each meeting shall begin with consideration and adoption of the order of business (Article 28, c.);
    - Permanent observers or their alternates may attend the meetings of the Council (Article 27, b);
    - Meetings shall be public. If the Chair so provides or any representative so requests, the meeting shall be closed (Article 26);
    - While it is necessary for the Organization to ensure that meetings are open to the public, that does not mean that anyone unable to demonstrate a legitimate interest under the applicable security protocols should be allowed access to the discussions;
    - Quorum should be established, confirmed and reported to the Chair (Article 29);
    - For virtual meetings, quorum will be established by roll call at the beginning of the meeting, and before any vote, as needed;
    - A virtual meeting should be ready at any moment for a vote: to establish an order of precedence and to proceed to a roll-call vote (Charter VI). Before a vote, a quick roll call can be taken to ensure there is quorum;
    - Delegations shall be able to exercise their right to vote. The conditions for the exercise of that right must be guaranteed in technical, logistical, and equitable terms for all members;
    - Votes shall be taken by a roll-call beginning with the delegation of the state whose name is drawn (Article 39);
* Delegations shall have the option to exercise their right to raise a point of order   
  (Article 32)
* The Chair will manage the list of speakers and offer the floor (Article 9, b), with technical support from the Secretariat.

**III. Logistics**

The following recommendations are being submitted to member states as elements to ensure the successful and secure holding of virtual meetings of CIDI and its subsidiary bodies:

* Participants should connect at least 30 minutes ahead of time in order to resolve any technical issues and allow the meeting to start on time.
* Participants (Permanent Representatives and alternates) and viewers must join the meeting with their country listed, alongside their name and title in parentheses. i.e.: Uruguay (Juan Pérez, Ambassador). When speaking the delegate’s webcam must be turned on to confirm the identity of the participant.
* Interpretation services will be provided in the four official languages of the Organization for CIDI meetings and Spanish/English for the meetings of the permanent committees.
  + Currently the platform being used for virtual meetings allows up to 200 people. This number can be increased if needed, for an additional cost.
* Each meeting will be assigned a conference specialist who will follow the standard protocols for its celebration.
* A technician team leader will be designated as point of contact to troubleshoot any technical problems that may arise from the delegations. In addition, a manual will be provided to all participants outlining the technological requirements for optimal connection.
  + In order to ensure that any technical failures do not suddenly prevent the remote presence of a member state at a meeting, delegations will be asked to sign in with two participants each.
* Delegations will be provided with the necessary training in order to be able to efficiently manage the virtual meetings.
* Concerns about cybersecurity are being addressed with the platform provider in order to guarantee the most reliable standards.

**IV. Financial implications**

Costs of virtual meetings shall be provided to delegations on an ongoing basis or as requested.

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