PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE OEA/Ser.G

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES CP/CAJP/SA.681/20

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COMMITTEE ON JURIDICAL AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS Original: Spanish

Summary of the special meeting to share lessons learned and exchange good practices to advance   
a regional dialogue on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief,   
held on February 20, 2020

The meeting was conducted under the chairmanship of Ambassador Carlos Alberto Játiva, Permanent Representative of Ecuador and Chair of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP). It was called to order at 2:41 p.m.

The statutory quorum was established with the presence of representatives of Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

The audio recording of the meeting can be found at the following link:

<http://scm.oas.org/audios/2020/CP_CAJP_3525-02-20-2020.MP3>.

1. Adoption of the draft order of business

The Committee adopted the draft order of business ([CP/CAJP-3525/](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/English/HIST_20/CP41971e03.docx)19 rev. 6).

1. Freedom of religion and belief: A global mission with regional specificity

The presentations by Ambassador Samuel D. Brownback, United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, and by Commissioner Edgar Stuardo Ralón Orellana, Member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), can be found in documents [CP/CAJP/INF.689/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP41991T03.docx) and [CP/CAJP/INF.692/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP41994T03.docx), respectively.

1. International, constitutional, and legal frameworks: Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief

The presentation by Mr. Paulo Abrão, Executive Secretary of the IACHR, and the video statement by Ms. María Esperanza Adrianzen, Director of Interconfessional Affairs, Peruvian Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, can be found in documents [CP/CAJP/INF.693/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP41995T03.docx) and [CP/CAJP/INF.690/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP41992T03.docx), respectively.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Hugh Adsett, Permanent Representative of Canada, introduced the video statement by Mr. Rob Oliphant, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada. He offered some reflections on Canada’s efforts to advance international dialogue, action, and defense concerning the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief.

1. Religious freedom: strategies, lessons learned, and best practices for protecting and promoting freedom of religion or belief

Professor Ana María Célis, Director of the Center for Law and Religion at the *Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile* and resident of the International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies (ICLARS), delivered the first presentation in this segment. In her statement, Professor Celis acknowledged the importance of this meeting being convened and of the mandates that the last regular session of the General Assembly adopted on this subject. She therefore urged the delegations to keep working on actual implementation of and respect for the provisions of Article 12 of the American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San José). As regards strategies, she noted that religious freedom is normally accompanied by the kind of relationship that states have with religious institutions. Hence, religious freedom ought not to be viewed as something granted by the state but rather as a fundamental human right being exercised. She acknowledged religious organizations’ work as mediators and facilitators of dialogue in conflicts that have arisen in the region, calling for renewed trust in those organizations against that backdrop.

The presentations by Professor Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves, Member of the Faculty of Law of *Universidade Federal de Uberlândia* and Leading Researcher of the Brazilian Center for Studies in Law and Religion (CEDIRE); by Professor Brett G. Scharffs, Rex E. Lee Chair and Professor of Law at Brigham Young University’s J. Reuben Clark Law School; and by Mr. David J. Michaels, Director of United Nations and Intercommunal Affairs at B’nai B’rith International, can be found in documents [CP/CAJP/INF.701/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42045T03.docx), [CP/CAJP/INF.703/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42048T03.docx), [CP/CAJP/INF.691/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP41993T03.docx), respectively. In addition, a video presentation by Professor Nicolás Panotto, Managing Director, Multidisciplinary Studies Group on Religion and Public Advocacy (GEMRIP), can be found in document [CP/CAJP/INF.694/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP41999T03.docx).

1. Lessons learned and exchange of ideas and comments by member states and permanent observers regarding freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief
   * Remarks by member states and permanent observers

As part of the dialogue for member states and permanent observers to share lessons learned and exchange ideas and observations, statements were made by: Ambassador Fernando Simas Magalhães, Permanent Representative of Brazil (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.702/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42047T03.docx)); Ambassador Hernán Salinas, Permanent Representative of Chile (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.712/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42074T03.docx)); Ambassador Montserrat Solano, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.697/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42041T03.docx)); Ambassador Alejandro Ordóñez, Permanent Representative of Colombia (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.706/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42056T03.docx)); Ambassador Luz Elena Baños, Permanent Representative of Mexico (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.695/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42039T03.docx)); Ambassador Rita Claverie Díaz de Sciolli, Permanent Representative of Guatemala (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.696/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42040T03.docx)); Ambassador Gustavo Tarre, Permanent Representative of Venezuela (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.700/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42044T03.docx)); Nicaragua, Dominican Republic (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.698/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42042T03.docx)); Suriname, Ecuador (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.707/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42057T03.docx)); Paraguay (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.699/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42043T03.docx)); Argentina (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.694/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42055T03.docx)); Antigua and Barbuda (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.704/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42053T03.docx)); and Bolivia (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.711/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42072T03.docx)). The permanent observers making statements were Monsignor Mark Miles, Permanent Observer of the Holy See (statement available in document [CP/CAJP/INF.713/20](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/SPANISH/HIST_20/CP42075T02.docx)), and by Ambassador Simone De Santi, Permanent Observer of Italy.

At the end of the statements, the CAJP took note of the panelists’ presentations under items 2, 3, and 4 on the order of business, as well as of the statements by the delegations of the member states and permanent observers during the discussion of item 5, and decided that the results of this special meeting would be submitted to the Permanent Council for subsequent transmittal to the General Assembly at its fiftieth regular session, pursuant to the mandate set forth in resolution AG/RES. 2941 (XLIX-O/19).

Before adjourning the meeting, the Chair announced the two CAJP meetings scheduled for Thursday, February 27, 2020.

There being no other business to consider, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

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