PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE OAS/Ser.G

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES CP/CAJP-3586/21

6 May 2021

COMMITTEE ON JURIDICAL AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS Original: English

REPORT ON THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON JURIDICAL AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS ON “THE POWER OF INCLUSION AND THE BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY”

April 8, 2021

(Document prepared by Department of Social Inclusion, Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity)

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The meeting was chaired by Ambassador Josué Fiallo, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic and Chair of the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP). It was called to order at 2:30 p.m.

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

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12. **Background:**

In 2018 for the first time, Canada and its cosponsors Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay presented text on the “The power of inclusion and the benefits of diversity” text for inclusion in the “Promotion and Protection of Human Rights” resolution which was approved as AG/RES. 2928 (XLVIII-O/18) at the 2018 OAS General Assembly and adopted by consensus. The text called upon the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP):

“*to organize, within existing resources, a special meeting where member states may share lessons learned and exchange good practices to advance the goals of this resolution, and to present the results of that meeting to the Permanent Council prior to the forty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly.” (OP4)*

In fulfilment of the mandate, the special meeting of the CAJP took place on February 12th, 2019. During that session, OAS member states’ shared experiences in domestic public policies that promote inclusion and respect for diversity. The approved Order of Business can be found at [CP/CAJP-3491/18 rev. 3](http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/ENGLISH/HIST_19/CP40295E03.doc). The summary of that session can be found at [CP/CAJP/SA. 655/19](http://scm.oas.org/IDMS/Redirectpage.aspx?class=CP/CAJP/SA&classNum=655&lang=e)

In the resolution AG/RES. 2941 (XLIX-O/19) approved during the 2019 General Assembly, Canada and its cosponsors, satisfied with the outcome of the special meeting held in February that year, called for a similar meeting to be held in 2020. However due to the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the meeting did not take place.

During the General Assembly in 2020, the member states agreed through AG/RES.2946 (L-O/20), member states that given the fact that the “emergency situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the holding of a 2020 CAJP special session addressing the topic of “The Power of Inclusion and the Benefits of Diversity” as mandated by section xi of resolution AG/RES. 2941 (XLIX-O/19”, they extended the mandate to allow for the special session to take place before the 2021 General Assembly.

The special meeting took place on April 8. During this session, member states were invited to address the question of how to change the prevailing attitudes that cause vulnerability and marginalization by exploring how civil society and other social actors have a positive role to play in building bridges across divisions and removing prejudices that cause discrimination.

1. **Remarks by President of the CAJP**

After welcoming member states, the Chair recognized Canada, who, in a spirit of cooperation, has been the driving force behind this special session for several years.

He reminded the CAJP of the origin of the mandate to carry out this special session during the forty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly (GA). The mandate called for member states to share lessons learned and exchange good practices to promote the objectives of the section on “The Power of Inclusion and the Benefits of Diversity” of the resolution on “Human Rights”. It also urged them to continue efforts to create more inclusive communities that consolidate respect for the intrinsic dignity of the person and a greater degree of economic, social, cultural, civil and political well-being for all. The section also called for the promotion of a culture of inclusion that respects diversity, through political leadership, inclusive democratic processes and a space for broad dialogue that provides an environment conducive to civil society.

He highlighted that the mandate to hold this session was renewed at the fiftieth regular session of the GA, due to the fact that it did not take place in 2020, as originally mandated in resolution AG / RES. 2941 (XLIX-O / 19) due to the pandemic. The objectives of the meeting according, is to ensure that the importance and complexity of inclusivity is increasingly recognized, particularly with regard to the impacts and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and the worrying problems of racial discrimination.

He noted the role that the relevant organs and departments of the OAS play in building inclusive societies and the need for open participation with civil society organizations to raise the quality of life of the inhabitants of our hemisphere, especially those who must fight many times harder to get ahead, because of the history of colonialism, racism, classism that have been so difficult to eradicate.

1. **Statements by Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian, Director, Department of Social Inclusion, Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity, OAS**

According to Dr. Muñoz-Pogossian, the topic of the “Power of Inclusion and Benefits of Diversity” is especially timely in the current context of pandemic, since the crisis, which is not only a health crisis but also economic and social one, has revealed the deep inequalities in the Americas, and how far the region is from truly being inclusive and respectful of the diversity.

She shared that, at the time of the presentation, 7 countries in the Americas were among the 20 nations in the world with the most deaths from coronavirus, and that as of March 2021, around 1.3 million people died and 55.2 million people contracted the virus in our region.

She went on to say that while the pandemic is having an impact on all human beings, it is undeniable that many of the people who contract or die from the virus are older people, people with disabilities, people of African descent and indigenous people, migrants, refugees or displaced people, LGBTI people, and people living in extreme poverty or poverty.

She expressed that presenting convincing arguments about how society in general benefits from inclusion and diversity is urgent and necessary, and that the best way to do so is by demonstrating in a tangible way the cost of exclusion in terms of its impact on the economic and human development of our societies is the best way forward. She then presented three examples to support the argument that exclusion has a tangible economic cost on the wider society:

1. A study by Citibank that showed that the US economy lost $ 16 trillion for reasons associated with discrimination.
2. A 2015 study conducted by Research for Development in Colombia that documented an annual loss of 0.43% of GDP as a result of the expected lost earnings of children who do not attend school. However, on a positive note, it illustrates that universal primary education could lift 1.4 million Colombians out of poverty.
3. An effort of the organization, Open for Business, which is coordinating a project to measure the economic cost of LGBTI exclusion and to build business arguments for greater inclusion in the Caribbean region.

However, creating an environment where people can accept and digest this type of data and where the deep-seated paradigm shifts we need can take place requires a combination of efforts between grassroots organizations and governments.

She stated that the Department of Social Inclusion of the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity is in a unique position to support these efforts between grassroots organizations and governments. She highlighted that in the formulation and execution of projects with government counterparts in member states, it is common practice, within the Department, to include civil society organizations in situ that understand the context in which it operates and are in a position to identify the best ways to enhance the contribution that the Department aims to make. She went on to present several examples of how the Department has leveraged the support of CSOs to lay the groundwork to create societies that are accepting of inclusion and diversity.

She gave the example of the project that the Department is implementing with the OAS National Office in Haiti entitled “Strengthening the capacities of civil society organizations in Haiti to reduce stigma against people living with HIV and other vulnerable groups, including LGBTI persons". The project supports UNAIDS and Housing Works in the creation of an observatory to monitor the stigmatization of people living with HIV / AIDS with a focus on vulnerable groups, and the status of their access to rights from an intersectional perspective. The project also aims to strengthen civil society organizations in planning and developing programs that educate people about discrimination against people living with HIV.

Through its work with governments and civil society organizations on the ground, the Department’s key role is facilitating the transfer of knowledge about how to generate inclusion and diversity and how to normalize the practice of inclusion and respect for diversity within their organizations and to the rest of society.

Some of the principles the department tries to impart through its work:

* The use of inclusive language: avoiding expressions or comments based on prejudices that discriminate against groups of people based on race, gender or socioeconomic status.
* The need to design projects where the beneficiaries are the center: focusing on who they are, not their condition, and doing so with the protection of their human rights as a goal.
* The need to form diverse teams. Normalizing the vision and presence of women and groups in vulnerable situations in teams to reflect human diversity and address diverse needs, always from an intersectional perspective.
* The generation of legitimacy of the principle of inclusion through co-creation processes that consider the inputs of groups in vulnerable situations.

*The full* [Presentation](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPBMP.docx) *by Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian, Director of the Department of Social Inclusion, SARE* (AVAILABLE IN SPANISH)

1. **Statements by Yasir Naqvi, CEO of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC)**

Mr. Naqvi thanked the CAJP for receiving him and for adopting the resolution “The Power of Inclusion and Benefits of Diversity.”

He pointed out that the ICC is in the city of Ottawa on the unsurrendered and unseated territory of the Algonquin people. He said that for the Institute, it is important to acknowledge the land on which the Institute is situated to understand Canada’s history of colonialism and remember the work that needs to be done with the Indigenous peoples in the country.

The ICC, a non-profit organization, was created about 15 years ago by the Right Honorable Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul to promote active citizenship, inclusion and belonging. The aim of the Institute is “to build a national and international coalition to create a world where people, policies and places are inclusive by default.”

Mr. Naqvi stated that from the ICC’s perspective, diversity is a reality. The action part is inclusion. It requires active work and a choice to take advantage of and benefit from the diverse environments in which we live. He stated that “Inclusive communities, countries, policies and behaviors are achieved when all members of society have access and feel that they can meaningfully participate free from discrimination in the social, cultural, economic and demographic aspects of their chosen community.” In this regard, he said that active citizenship is the pathway to an inclusive future. Citizenship is an action and not merely an identity or status. It requires all voices so participation should be available to everyone, and he said that this inclusive participation is what leads to more resilient communities. He believed that it is through the sharing of experiences and stories that people realize that despite their diversity, they have a lot more in common than what divides them.

He then went on to highlight some key programs of the institute that help to celebrate diversity and foster inclusion:

1. Citizenship ceremonies, which do not solely focus on the legal aspect of becoming a citizen but also the social aspect by facilitating dialogues between new Canadians and community members, including Indigenous leaders, of what it means to be a Canadian and promote a shared culture of Canada.
2. Canoo is a mobile application developed by the Institute which allows all new Canadians free access for a year to 1400 museums, art galleries, science centers and historical sites to highlight the importance of the different cultures that make up Canada through arts and culture.
3. 6 Degrees is a program that encourages meaningful conversations about inclusion and the immigrant journey. It is a global forum for inclusion that convenes established and emerging leaders to explore questions of citizenship and inclusion through a powerful network that creates connections, conversations and action. The aim is to have an international reach by also hosting 6 Degree sessions in other countries. There have also been sessions in Mexico and Germany.

*Further information on the Six Degrees program is available at* [*Video*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJ1h0PQpjiY&ab_channel=6Degrees)(AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH)

1. **Statement of** **Carlos Quesada, Executive Director and Founder, The Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights**

The Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights is an international capacity building organization that works to promote and protect the human rights of activists in Latin America and the Caribbean that works on the issue of discrimination, based on race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation and gender identity, with an intersectional approach.

He reiterated that COVID has disproportionally impacted different populations of the Americas; in terms of access to treatment, economic distress, deaths, cases or now access to the available vaccines. Over the past year, the Institute supported its partners – predominantly Afro-descendant and LGBTI groups –on how public policies to respond to the pandemic have not taken into account a disaggregated or intersectional approach. They have also documented how in some countries the pandemic has been an excuse to keep violating human rights in the region.

The Organization identified the following challenges:

* The effects of the pandemic must be observed in an intersectional manner, highlighting the different contexts of race-ethnicity / gender / sexual orientation or gender identity / national origin, among others.
* The lack of updated and disaggregated statistical data has contributed to the lack of knowledge of the true impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable populations; In addition, it prevents the creation of adequate solutions to stop infections, deaths and an adequate distribution of vaccines.

With regard to the paragraphs on the Power of Inclusion & Benefits of Diversity of the Human Rights resolution, he stated that member states need to begin designing, executing and implementing inclusive public policies targeting populations in situations of vulnerability. He reminded states of their commitment to develop action plans to improve the lives of people, highlighting the Plan of Action for Persons of African Descent in the Americas in support of the Decade for People of African Descent.

He also took the opportunity to ask states to sign, ratify and adhere to the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance and the Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance as more signatures and ratifications will expand the protection framework and ensure that people’s economic, social, cultural and political rights are protected despite their race, sexual orientation, gender identity, migratory status, etc.

He ended by recommending:

1. That member states ratify the Conventions above-mentioned and implement them. This would help combat the discrimination faced by the different vulnerable groups in the region.
2. Create policies that allow the most vulnerable populations universal access to health services, food security and education.
3. Increase the collection of official, permanent, reliable statistical data, disaggregated by ethnicity, with intersectional approaches by all government entities.
4. Include in the emergency and post-COVID plans concrete actions directed at the Afro-descendant and Indigenous People, both rural and urban, respecting the right to prior consultation and consent, and their different intersectionalities, for example, children, women, displaced persons, migrants and the LGBTI population.

*The full* [*Presentation*](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPQuesada.pdf) *of Carlos Quesada, Executive Director and Founder, The Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights*

1. **Statement of Ivan Chanis Barahona, Founder,** **Fundación Iguales**

Mr. Chanis began by stating the mission of Fundación Iguales “to eliminate discrimination due to sexual and gender diversity, establishing and strengthening programs for diagnosis, awareness, promotion and defense of rights humans.”

He framed his comments by focusing on two questions:

1. How we can change current attitudes that cause vulnerability and marginalization and,
2. How to build a culture of inclusion that combats social divisions, prejudice and discrimination.

From the Foundation’s perspective the first question is addressed through an education in human rights. By reinforcing a culture of respect for human rights, more peaceful cities are created, and this has an influence on dispelling learned behaviors, barriers and inheritances which result in structural inequality of our societies. From a political perspective, building a culture of human rights also ensures that the people in charge of developing public policy, understand the importance of including a human rights perspective in an intersectional manner.

On the question “How to build a culture of inclusion that combats social divisions, prejudices, and discrimination, the Foundation believes that ​ strategic communication through strategic alliances is necessary to generate a change of consciousness. He stressed that to develop effective communication strategies that work in a world that is so diverse and interconnected, it is important to take advantage of technology and work with communication experts.

He also highlighted the key role that States play in providing spaces for political participation that promote the understanding of the complexities of discrimination. He added that, nowadays, some civil society organizations believe that their role is to restrict the rights of persons in situations of vulnerability. He reminded States that as the main guarantors of respect for human rights in their respective countries, it is their responsibility to address this in an effective and democratic manner.

He also talked about the key role the private sector plays, through corporate social responsibility, in promoting inclusion and diversity by spreading those values within their businesses as well as externally to their clients and customers. He also highlighted that, according to one expert, Juliet Bourke, a workplace that encouraged freedom of thought, built on principles of diversity and inclusion, productivity increased by 20% and 30% less risk is generated.

He concluded by introducing the concept of “glocally” which means that responses to the needs of each place can be resolved by studying good practices and advances in other places or spaces and sharing some final considerations that included the need for an honest and respectful collaboration between the Governments and civil society.

*The full* [*Presentation*](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPChanis.pdf) *and* [*Power Point*](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPChanis.pptx) *by Ivan Chanis Barahona, President, Fundación Iguales* (AVAILABLE IN SPANISH ONLY)

1. **Presentation by Commissioner Flávia Piovesan, Second Vice-President of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights**

Commissioner Piovesan highlighted that the IACHR has been monitoring the discriminatory impact of the Coronavirus on groups in situations of vulnerability since the pandemic began. To express its support for the equitable distribution of vaccines, the IACHR issued resolution 1-21 on the pandemic and vaccines in the Americas on World Health Day which took place the day before this Special Meeting.

She looked at the topic of the power of inclusion and benefits of diversity from an IACHR perspective by looking at:

1. How does the Inter-American System protect diversity and social inclusion?

* She said that based on the fact that Human rights law states that all human beings deserve respect, one of the State’s duties is to prohibit discrimination and intolerance and adopt measures that promote equality.

1. What are the prospects for strengthening diversity and social inclusion?

* The Inter-American Court on Human Rights underscores that the notion of equality is based on human nature itself and is inseparable from human dignity. Therefore, it is incompatible that any group of humans is seen as superior or inferior in comparison to others.
* She also highlighted that there is a financial cost of exclusion and that the World Bank has measured the cost of excluding LGBTI persons and women resulting in decrease in GDP of 0.7 % and 3.7% respectively in many countries. A McKinsey Report on the power of parity concluded that progress with regard to equal rights could generate millions or billions of dollars.

She mentioned six fundamental strategies to promote the right to dignity and social inclusion:

1. Ratification of the Inter-American Treaties and Conventions, namely the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance and the Inter-American Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance. They need to be universalised to create standards and strengthen protections.
2. Eradicate discrimination both in the public and private sector
3. Eliminate hate speech and other contemporary ways of discrimination.
4. Promote equality through affirmative action. Affirmative measures are legitimate and are necessary to alleviate a past pattern of discrimination and promote social change.
5. Have indicators for equality and promoting disaggregated data on gender and ethnicity.
6. Promote the value of diversity through educational programs and social awareness raising campaigns that celebrate the pluri-ethnic diversity of the Americas.

She concluded by saying that “intolerance is based on radical ideology of superiority and that to fight it we need to appreciate the value of dignity, diversity and inclusion so that all persons can be free and equal with dignity.”

1. **Presentation by Mario Alfredo Hernández Sánchez, Collaborator in the Liaison Area and spokesperson on disability issues for the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (Mexico)**

The presentation by Mr. Sanchez looked at 5 points on non-discrimination and intersectionality based on the Mexican experience.

1. In 2021, Mexico celebrated 20 years since the institutionalization of the fight against discrimination, if its origin is considered as the year that political and social consensus allowed the inclusion of the anti-discrimination clause in Article 1 of the Constitution in the year 2001.

Since 2001, there have been legal developments to dismantle inequality. In 2003, the Federal Law to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination was enacted, which defines the scope of the right to non-discrimination and constitutes the foundation of the derived legislative and public policy interventions. In 2010 the constitutional reform on human rights was achieved that establishes the Constitution and international treaties in a single normative block for the protection of the dignity of people under any circumstance. In 2019, the process was completed that provided each federative entity in the Mexican Republic with a normative framework on non-discrimination and, in many cases, with a local authority to make this right justiciable and enforceable at the local level.

Additionally, over time, thanks to dialogues that involved citizens, academia, social organizations and public actors, Mexicans have come to see discrimination as a public problem that requires decisive collective action.

1. Secondly, in Mexico and the Americas in general, today we are more aware of the complex nature of discrimination, including areas and spaces where people’s rights are violated due to discriminatory stereotypes, prejudices and stigma. He stated that in order to fight discrimination, the theory and perspective of intersectionality are fundamental.

He explained that, as a theory, intersectionality has guided the National Council’s diagnoses on the situation of historically discriminated groups and that their position of social disadvantage is the product of the confluence of three elements*: the negative symbolic construction of their identities and ascriptions; the discriminatory practices that are placed on them at a given time and space; and the inequality gaps that separate those who have certain characteristics from those who do not in terms of easy access to rights and opportunities*. As an advocacy tool, the intersectionality perspective means that any legislative and public policy intervention would have to focus on the person and their complexity defined by gender, age, skin tone, culture, sexual orientation, among other factors that could generate discrimination.

1. Intersectionality, as a theory and practice, has its origin in feminist studies and became more complex with studies on interculturality.
2. He said that Intersectionality, as a theory and a practice, criticizes the historical alienation and negation of certain people and populations. . He also views intersectionality, as a theory and a practice that supports self-determination by providing people with the opportunity to take advantage of to their rights and opportunities as part of an individual and collective history.
3. Public action on the rights of people and populations requires the tools of intersectionality in order to not perpetuate a discriminatory culture, indirectly and unintentionally, in the public service.

*The full presentation of* Mario Alfredo Hernández Sánchez, Collaborator in the Liaison Area and spokesperson on disability issues of the National Council to Prevent Discrimination (Mexico): [Presentation](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPHernandez.docx) (AVAILABLE IN SPANISH)

1. **Member State Interventions:**

The following countries made interventions sharing what they are doing to create more inclusive societies.

* **Argentina**

1. The representative of Argentina, Alexis Am, began his intervention by pointing out that diversity is of great importance for this country, consequently, the country recently established the Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity.
2. He reported on the application of two programs to strengthen action between the State and Civil Society. One of them is the National Registry of Territorial Promoters of Gender and Diversity at the community level. Another is the Articular program, which seeks to strengthen and accompany Civil Society organizations in the formulation and implementation of projects at the community level through the transfer of resources and technical assistance.
3. He concluded by establishing that different State bodies are signing agreements to design awareness-raising and promotion of rights and promote campaigns for the valorization of social and cultural pluralism.

*The full presentation* Mr. Alexis Am, Minister, Alternate Representative of Argentina to the OAS: [Presentation](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPArgentina.docx) (AVAILABLE IN SPANISH)

* **Brasil**

1. The representative of Brazil, Igor Carvalho Sobral, began his participation by highlighting that diversity is a marked characteristic in the region and fundamental in Brazilian society.
2. Next, he shared public policies and government initiatives related to the promotion of racial equality in Brazil, such as the creation in 2003 of the Political Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality, under whose competence are 28 population segments, including the Afro-descendant population, which represents 54% of the population of Brazil.
3. He reported the existence of an initiative in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice and Public Security for the training of members of the Public Security Program to reduce violence against the Afro-descendant population.
4. He mentioned, among the challenges related to the Covid-19 pandemic, the development of a contingency plan to prevent contamination in indigenous communities.
5. Referring to education, he commented on the existence of affirmative actions aimed at promoting investment in research centers on Afro-descendant culture.
6. He stated that the aforementioned Secretariat has benefited from the participation of civil society through the Council for Racial Equality and the Council for Traditional Peoples and Communities, both collegiate bodies, with representatives of the federal government and civil society organizations.
7. He reported that in the aforementioned councils, the Secretariat held 4 national conferences to promote racial equality, the last being in 2018.
8. He highlighted that in the last conference more than 1000 participants from all over Brazil met in Brasilia for the consolidation of the national policy to promote racial equality.

*The full presentation* Mr. Igor Sobral, Alternate Representative of Brazil to the OAS: [Presentation](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPBrasil.docx) (AVAILABLE IN PORTUGUESE)

* **Canada**

1. The Permanent Representative of Canada, Ambassador Hugh Adsett,began his intervention by inviting States to join in the development of this year's inclusion and diversity resolution.
2. He went on to recall that the date of this meeting coincided with the commemoration of Yom HaShoah, the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, and reiterated the importance of remaining vigilant against anti-Semitism and other forms of racism.
3. He highlighted the importance of civil society organizations in raising public awareness and demanding more just and inclusive practices from governments.
4. He established that the pandemic has exacerbated inequalities and populism threatens democratic societies. He added that in some autocratic governments freedoms and civic space are severely restricted and civil society organizations face digital surveillance.
5. He commented that digital spaces allow the spread of disinformation, conspiracy theories and hate speech. In addition, he asserted that ownership of the media, particularly social media, is concentrated in a few corporations, sometimes beyond the control of democratically elected leaders.
6. However, he expressed that the pandemic has also generated an unprecedented global mobilization of civil society to call for transformative changes and greater inclusion. He mentioned the Black Lives Matter movement as an example of this.
7. He emphasized the importance of an inclusive public school system as one of the most positive measures to foster a culture of inclusion.
8. He concluded by reiterating Canada's intention to present a new draft resolution at the next General Assembly ,with a special focus on inclusion as a key democratic principle, and invited member states to join the Group of Friends of Inclusion and contribute to the evaluation of the text.

*The full presentation* His Excellency Hugh Adsett, Permanent Representative of Canada to the OAS: (AVAILABLE IN [ENGLISH](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPCanada.docx) AND [FRENCH](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CP43994FCAJP.docx))

* **Chile**

1. Francisco Suberca, the National Director of the National Service on Disability of Chile, established that the Ministry of Social Development and Family coordinated instances to design responses to the emergency in a cooperative manner. In this sense, temporary isolation spaces were installed to control critical situations of residences with Covid, they delivered personal protective equipment and implemented a system to find replacement personnel when complete equipment went into quarantine.
2. He highlighted the development of protocols for the care and prevention of Covid-19 in residences, as well as recommendations for people with disabilities and those who assist or care for them.
3. He expressed that during times when mobility was restricted, they managed special mobility permits for people with autism, intellectual disabilities and their caregivers.
4. He highlighted that access to information was guaranteed in an inclusive manner, since all official announcements by the President of the Republic and the Ministry of Health incorporated Chilean sign language. In addition, easy-to-read material was designed to inform people with intellectual disabilities.
5. He referred to the creation of the free telephone line “Conectados al Caridar” and its system of interpreters for deaf people called Visorweb.
6. Regarding the vaccination figures, he stated that it is expected to reach 80% of the population at the end of the first semester and that to date 98% of adults with disabilities had received the first dose.
7. He reported that President Sebastian Piñera announced direct cash transfers for families and modifications to the employment subsidy, as well as an increase in the amounts for hiring vulnerable groups.
8. Finally, he emphasized the importance of advancing the political representation of groups that have generally been excluded. Consequently, he stressed that within the framework of the constitutional process they have agreed to reserve seats for representatives of the 10 native peoples in the constituent body and a 5% quota for candidates with disabilities.
9. He described the above as a “historic milestone” in this country.

*The full presentation* Mr. Francisco Suberca, National Director of the National Service on Disability of Chile: [Presentation](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPChile.doc) (AVAILABLE IN SPANISH)

* **Costa Rica**

1. The Permanent Representative of Costa Rica, Ambassador Alejandra Solano, called for "eroding the cultural foundations of existing social discrimination."
2. She reported that the Costa Rican State has been actively involved in a variety of initiatives that are not limited only to public and state policies, but include, other programs with the business sector and activities with civil society.
3. She highlighted that at the state level the mechanism for participation and consultation of the Inter-Institutional Commission for the Follow-up of the Implementation of International Human Rights Obligations was created. She added that within this space, civil society is directly involved in decisions that affect the rights of the populations they represent.
4. In the business sphere, she highlighted an initiative called Costa Rica Includes, through which programs and actions of the employer sector, both public and private, that promote the inclusion of people with disabilities are rewarded.
5. She reiterated the importance of the participation of the State as a communicating party to raise awareness and dialogue on inclusion and diversity. In that sense, she mentioned the participation of members of the Costa Rican government in a public demonstration related to the diversity march that has been taking place in this country for 10 years.
6. Finally, she pointed out that there are inequalities that intertwine and produce double or triple discrimination. "If we do not take this reality into account, we will not be able to implement public policies that address the problem in a comprehensive manner," she assured.

*The full presentation* Her Excellency Alejandra Solano, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the OAS: [Presentation](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPCostaRica.pdf) (AVAILABLE IN SPANISH)

* **Dominican Republic**

1. Dilia Jorge Mera of the Dominican Republic stated that the constitution of this country protects all people against discrimination, in addition, articles that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and / or gender identity have been included in ordinary laws such as the Law of the National Police, the Criminal Procedure Code, among other laws.
2. She reported that the Chamber of Deputies is discussing a draft Law on Equality and Non-Discrimination, in order to achieve greater legal protection for LGBTI people. In addition, she added that this body is aware of the draft reform of the Penal Code that includes penalties for discrimination, aggravated homicide and torture based on the sexual orientation of the victim.
3. She reported that in 2019 they held a national LGBTI dialogue promoted by UNDP that had the participation of officials from different institutions and that the Ministry of Women has included, in the gender and equality training course, a module on sexual orientation and gender identity aimed at public servants.
4. She highlighted that in 26% of households with LGBTI people, at least one member had lost his job permanently and 54% had to reduce the number of meals per day due to the reduction in family income.
5. She expressed having supported the National LGBTI Survey of the Dominican Republic, in a joint effort with UNDP and the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo, to gather information on the situation of violence, human rights and discrimination suffered by this population .

*The full presentation* Ms. Dilia Jorge Mera, Vice-Minister of the Presidency of the Dominican Republic: [Presentation](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPRDominicana.docx) (AVAILABLE IN SPANISH)

* **Ecuador**

1. The Permanent Representative of Ecuador, Ambassador Carlos Játiva, began his remarks by stating that the fight against discrimination should have a comprehensive approach, avoiding focusing on specific aspects.
2. He established that the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the structural deficiencies of the States and exacerbated levels of inequality, racism and xenophobia.
3. He added that the multidimensional effects of Covid-19 herald a hard and long recovery process that will mainly impact vulnerable populations. In this sense, he affirmed that Ecuador will try to execute public policies destined to promote the full exercise of people's rights.
4. He reported that actions have been developed to serve the student population in situations of vulnerability, disability, and human mobility. He added that, in this area, the government works to ensure access to technological equipment and connectivity in order to guarantee the right to education and work.
5. He asserted that Ecuador promotes the incorporation of people with disabilities, Afro-descendants and women into public service.

*The full presentation* His Excellency Carlos Játiva, Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the OAS: [Presentation](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPEcuador.pdf) (AVAILABLE IN SPANISH)

* **El Salvador**

1. The Interim Representative of El Salvador, Ambassador Wendy Acevedo, affirmed that the Covid-19 has shown the existing inequalities in the region and that there are more acts of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and intolerance.
2. She assured that the population of the Americas is diverse and that is where its wealth and strength lie.
3. She reported that the actions of the government of El Salvador aimed at inclusion were deepened during the pandemic in congruence with the objectives of the Cuscatlan Plan of social strategy with a human rights approach.
4. She reiterated that El Salvador will continue to support all the initiatives that are being developed within the OAS to make visible and address the needs of groups in vulnerable situations.

* **Guatemala**

1. The representative of Guatemala, Ana Luisa Gatica, began her participation by stating that "we are all different and at the same time equal in duties and rights, for the sole condition of being human."
2. She stated that Guatemala is a multilingual, intercultural and multiethnic country and reported that according to the latest census, the Guatemalan population is made up of the following: 41.7% Mayan, 1.8% Xincas, 0.1% Garífuna, 0.2% Afro-descendant and 56% Ladinos. In this census carried out in 2018, the belonging of the population was determined by self-identification, therefore, the indigenous peoples exercised their right to identify themselves.
3. She commented that in the aforementioned census the variable of self-identification of Afro-descendants was added for the first time, in compliance with the recommendations made by the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
4. She reported that, for more than 18 years, the Presidential Commission Against Discrimination and Racism against Indigenous Peoples has created and promoted important instruments, among which the organization of an intersectoral table stands out with the aim of having support for advisory services. and implementation of the public policy for coexistence and the elimination of racism.
5. She added that the Institute of Public Criminal Defense, through a multicultural approach, is in charge of sensitizing public defenders on indigenous peoples' issues.
6. She said that the government has translated key messages related to Covid-19 into indigenous languages.
7. She concluded by stating that Guatemala is fully committed to the fight against all forms of discrimination, since she recognizes that the strength of its society is found in all the differences of its inhabitants.

*The full presentation* Ms. Ana Luisa Gatica, Minister Counselor, Alternative Representative of Guatemala to the OAS: [Presentation](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPGuatemala.docx) (AVAILABLE IN SPANISH)

* **México**

1. The Permanent Representative of Mexico, Ambassador Luz Elena Baños, highlighted the relevance of the concept of intersectionality on which she expressed "it is not only a theoretical or academic construction, but a set of categories that are tangible in our daily lives."
2. She highlighted that the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) points out the macho culture and gender stereotypes that establish the roles of women and men in the family and society prevent achieving gender equality.
3. She classified as “indispensable” the committed and coordinated participation of actors such as local governments and the different powers of the State for the elaboration of public policies that promote inclusion and diversity.
4. She established that Mexico has insisted, in the various multilateral forums in which it participates, that people have different capacities and adequate inclusion in society, taking into account their intersectionalities, favoring social cohesion and contributing to the achievement of fairer and more equitable societies. egalitarian.
5. Reported that, on January 21, 2020, Mexico ratified the Inter-American Convention against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance and the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Discrimination.
6. Invited member states to ratify these two instruments of inter-American law

*The full presentation* Her Excellency Luz Elena Baños, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the OAS: [Presentation](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPMexico.docx) (AVAILABLE IN SPANISH)

* **Panama**
  1. The Permanent Representative of Panama, Ambassador María Roquebert, affirmed that, despite the fact that the principle of non-discrimination is present in constitutions and other national laws, every day there are behaviors that perpetuate discrimination, which she described as “a scourge that is maintains throughout our hemisphere and around the world”.
  2. She reiterated the importance of initiating self-analysis processes, both individually and collectively, in order to unlearn and deconstruct systematic practices of discrimination.
  3. She affirmed that the priority responsibility in the fight against discrimination rests with the State, for which she urged to review laws that do not comply with this objective, in addition to the generation of regulations with an inclusive approach.
  4. She condemned hate speech, intolerance and discrimination in all spheres.
  5. She concluded by highlighting that it is essential to remove all obstacles so that “our exclusive societies give way to inclusive societies”.

*The full presentation of Her Excellency* María Roquebert, Permanent Representative of Panama to the OAS: [Presentation](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPPanama.docx)

* **Peru**

1. The representative of Peru, Yesica Fonseca, expressed that Peru seeks, with its inclusion policies, to improve the quality of life of the population in vulnerable situations and those in poverty.
2. She added that this country tries to manage at all levels of government activities that allow the development of the Amazonian, Andean and Afro-Peruvian peoples.
3. She informed that she will send to the CAJP secretariat a presentation of the activities that the Peruvian State has carried out in terms of inclusion.

*The full presentation of Ms. Yesica Fonseca*, Alternate Representative of Peru to the OAS: [Presentation](http://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2021/CPSC10160CAJPPeru.docx)

* **United States of America**

1. US Alternate Representative Ed Heartney began by highlighting that the US under the Biden and Harris administration has taken an active role in promoting diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.
2. Exposed, as an example of the commitment to inclusion and diversity, that the State Department has tried to recruit a workforce that truly represents the United States, and the support of the President and Vice President of this country for these ideals is manifested in the fact that they have the most diverse cabinet in history.
3. He reported on the creation of a new position in the State Department called "Chief of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" whose objective will be to follow a Diversity and Equity Plan that the Department will soon launch.
4. He concluded by reiterating that the United States is committed to promoting a culture of inclusion and diversity.

To listen to all Member State interventions, please use the following link:

<http://scm.oas.org/audios/2021/CP_CAJP-3569_04-08-2021_audio.MP3>

1. **Salient Points emerging from the Special Meeting**
   * 1. COVID-19 exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities that are rooted in exclusion that already existed in member states.
     2. Countries are dedicated to finding ways to address the pandemic so that all persons, including persons from groups in situations of vulnerability have access to information regarding safety measures and access to vaccinations.
     3. The growth of digital spaces has resulted in the proliferation of discrimination, misinformation and hate speech which makes the fight against discrimination and exclusion.
     4. The signature, ratification and adherence of more member states to the Inter-American Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Forms of Intolerance and the Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance will expand the legal protection framework.
     5. Intersectionality is key to effectively fight discrimination and to construct more equitable and inclusive societies.
     6. There is proof that there is an economic cost to exclusion and countries will be better off economically by being more inclusive of groups in situations of vulnerability.
     7. Confronting exclusion and promoting diversity requires public sector-private sector-civil society collaboration.
     8. Paradigm shifts in the attitudes of those who consider themselves to be “the majority” must uproot inherited notions of superiority are crucial.
2. **Decisions**

Following the remarks, the Committee:

1. Took note of the presentations made by the experts from the Department of Social Inclusion of the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, Fundación Iguales, The Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rightsand the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination (Mexico), as well as the interventions of the member states.
2. Requested that the General Secretariat, through the Department of Social Inclusion of the Secretariat for Access to Rights and Equity, provide the Chair with the conclusions of this meeting to help in the preparation of the draft resolution for the General Assembly.

Before adjourning the meeting, the Chair asked the delegations to send their statements for distribution and inclusion in the rapporteur’s report.

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