Organization of American States

PAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES
March 2009-February 2010

http://www.ipgh.org
The Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) was founded on February 7, 1928 at the Sixth International Conference of the Americas held in Havana, Cuba. In 1930, the government of Mexico provided the PAIGH with a building at No. 29 Ex-Arzobispado Street in Tacubaya, Mexico City, in which its offices are currently located. In January of 1949, it became the first organization of the Inter-American System when the Council of the Organization of American States and the PAIGH signed an agreement. Subsequently, in May of 1974 within the framework of the Buenos Aires Protocol, a new agreement was formalized between the Organization of American States and the PAIGH.

**OBJECTIVES**

The following are the PAIGH’s objectives, which are set down in article 1 of its Organic Statutes:

- To encourage, coordinate, and publicize cartographical, geographical, historical, and geophysical studies, as well as other related scientific studies of interest to the Americas.

- To promote and coordinate scientific and technical development, research, relations among institutions and specialists, studies and training in cartography, geography, geophysics and history.

- To promote and stimulate cooperation among the specialized institutions of the Americas and international organizations in its four fields of activity.

**STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION**

Below is the organizational structure of the PAIGH:

- General Assembly
- Directing Council
- Meeting of Officers
- General Secretariat
- Commissions on Cartography, Geography, History, and Geophysics
- National Sections

**General Assembly:** The General Assembly is the supreme organ of the PAIGH and determines the Institute’s scientific, administrative and financial policies. It meets every four years and elects the Officers of the Institute. It is composed of the delegations of the Member States, the PAIGH’s Officers and invited Observers. Each of the delegations of the Member States has the right to one vote.
Directing Council: The Directing Council is the Pan American organ of the PAIGH which is entrusted with the functions of the General Assembly during the intervals between meetings of the latter. It meets once a year and is composed of representatives from each of the Member States and the Officers of the PAIGH.

Meeting of Officers: The Meeting of Officers is the organ that directs and coordinates the Institute’s activities between the Meetings of the Directing Council. The Officers meet every six months and the Meeting is composed of the President, the Vice President, the Chairpersons of the Commissions and the Secretary General.

General Secretariat: The General Secretariat is the PAIGH’s central and permanent organ responsible for administration, coordination of organ activities, providing the necessary assistance for the proper functioning of said organs, execution of the tasks entrusted to it and ensuring compliance of the agreements adopted for the smooth functioning of the PAIGH. The Secretary General is the representative of the PAIGH and remains in office for four years.

Commissions: The Commissions are the organs entrusted with promoting the scientific and technical development of their respective fields of action in the Member States. They are also responsible for coordinating, encouraging and supervising projects and other agreements involving research approved by the General Assembly or the Directing Council. There are four commissions: Cartography, Geography, History, and Geophysics, which are subdivided into Committees and Working Groups. The Commissions meet every two years.

National Sections: These are entities established by each Member State, whose role is to fulfill the objectives of the PAIGH in the sphere of their respective countries; they have the financial support of their respective governments. Each National Section is composed of persons appointed by the governments of the Member States as Representatives before the organs of the PAIGH.

MEMBER STATES

Only American states may be full members of the PAIGH. The countries of other continents may request to be Permanent Observers.

The PAIGH’s 21 Member Countries are:

Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The Permanent Observers are: France, Israel, Jamaica, and Spain.
2005-2009 PAIGH OFFICERS

From left to right: Carlos Mendoza, Chairperson of the Geophysics Commission; Maria Cristina Mineiro, Chairperson of the History Commission; Santiago Borrero, Secretary General of the PAIGH; Oscar Aguilar, President of the PAIGH; Leonel Vivas, Vice president of the PAIGH; Alejandra Coll, Chairperson of the Cartography Commission; Mario Alberto Reyes, Chairperson of the Geography Commission. During this period, the Officers met statutorily in 8 sessions, from the 64th to the 72nd, since the establishment of the formal system of the Meeting of Officers.
1. Introduction

With support provided by the decentralized system of National Sections which characterizes the PAIGH, the Institute responds to the growing demand of the international scientific community in its task of land interpretation, with a geographical and historical analysis and an authentic continental vision. This task is now guided by the 2010-2020 Pan American Agenda which was approved by Resolution 4 of the 19th General Assembly (Ecuador, 2009).

Whereas this report refers to the program implemented in 2009, taking into consideration that this year closes the works of the 2005-2009 institutional quadrennium, this report comprehends the period from re-engineering the PAIGH in 2004 to the outlook for 2010-2020.

2. Economic and Operational Status

In 2009 the execution of the institutional program of the General Secretariat has been undertaken under normal conditions as a result of the sustainability and gradual consolidation of the financial, administrative, operational and technical plan begun in 2004. Under these conditions, the execution of the Regular Fund has been normal and its resources are higher than in previous years.

The income of the PAIGH is limited, as it is the result of the maintenance quotas contributed by the Member States, which have not been modified since 1996. Nonetheless, the Operational Fund is currently at its regulatory upper limit and income has increased thanks to the prompt payment of the annual maintenance quotas to the Institute by 15 of 19 active Member States. Moreover, income from quotas corresponding to fiscal year 2009 paid in the first semester are equal to 84% of the Regular Fund budget for this year. Quotas pending payment from previous years, totaling US$48,877, is at its lowest point in more than a decade. The Institute’s due payments are at a historic low and are mostly explained by the debts of two member countries: Nicaragua (10 quotas) and Bolivia (5 quotas).

In order to continue under normal operating conditions, project growth and thus provide better services to the Pan American community we must persevere with the current level of support and the efforts of the Member States, so as to avoid a repeat of the situation experienced between 2000 and 2004 when annual contributions fell.

As has been the case since 2007, the PAIGH’s basic financial documents corresponding to 2006-2008 are available on the Institute’s website.

When comparing the 2005-2009 consolidated financial results, we can conclude that the aforementioned trends which had prevailed in the past were reversed and that we have financial and administrative sustainability, characterized by the following elements:
• Normalcy in the Regular Fund’s income
• Sound condition of the Operational and Special Funds
• Growth of institutional patrimony
• All labor obligations and precautions are up to date
• Effective execution of resources for Technical Assistance and Publications
• Sustainability and control of operating expenses, kept within parameters of austerity over the past five years
• Attitude of innovation to make the institutional financial, administrative and technical aspects even more sustainable and effective

Thanks to this, we were able to guarantee funds for the normal execution of 2005-2009 budgetary commitments. Moreover, we have the resources to operate and comply with the Institute’s 2010 Technical Assistance Program. The PAIGH community has not experienced any delays in contributions for their projects, in spite of the periodic oscillations in the PAIGH’s income either.

Analysis of the performance of income and expenditure during the decade from another angle allows us to understand what happened when we compare the total results of the fiscal years. Between 2000 and 2004 we accumulated annual losses which led to the paralysis of the institution. Since 2005 though, without exception, we have had a surplus, which explains the upturn observed in the finances of the PAIGH and its current soundness (Graph 1).

Graph 1
Income and Expenditure, 1999-2009
(Thousands of US$)

To complete this financial analysis we must mention that in the reported period, the distribution of budgetary allocations had undergone significant modifications and showed a growing trend towards operational and administrative expenses. Now, budgetary allocations with scientific purposes tend to be equivalent and proportional to those destined to assist with the administrative operations of the Institute.
3. Execution of the Technical Assistance Program

As part of the 2009 Regular Fund budget, the 41st Meeting of the Directing Council (El Salvador, 2008) approved a Technical Assistance Program consisting of 35 projects in the four Commissions worth US$181,660. The Program was executed without incident and complied with under conditions similar to those of year 2006, when an execution of 91% was registered. In year 2009, the Technical Assistance program registered an execution of 88%.

Five years ago this was not the case. The execution of the 2003 and 2004 Technical Assistance Programs was dependent on income from Member States’ quotas. Since then, execution has been very positive, at levels of more than 90%, which has represented a marked increase in the scientific activity of the Institute, in quantitative and qualitative terms.

To have a complete vision of the behavior of expenditures in scientific activities it would be wise to include the budget allocated to Publications. By doing so we would see a significant recovery, especially as of 2005 when the total executed climbed from 57.8% in 2004 to 81.84%. This trend has continued up until late 2009, when there was an execution of 86.60% (Table 1).
### Table 1

**Technical Assistance Projects and Publications**  
**Budget and Execution, 2004-2009**  
(US$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Regular Fund Annual Budget for Projects and Publications</th>
<th>Amount Executed on Projects and Publications</th>
<th>% Executed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>213,360</td>
<td>123,333</td>
<td>57.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>213,360</td>
<td>174,616</td>
<td>81.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>213,360</td>
<td>167,803</td>
<td>78.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>213,360</td>
<td>195,777</td>
<td>91.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>213,360</td>
<td>184,713</td>
<td>86.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>208,160</td>
<td>180,271</td>
<td>86.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Projects executed correspond to the work plans of the four technical Commissions of the PAIGH. Thus, in *Cartography* we can highlight the activities of the SIRGAS group for the development and introduction of the Geocentric Reference System for the Americas and the works for the creation of a new virtual map of the continent, consistent with the specifications of the Global Digital Map; in *Geography*, the projects connected to the dynamic new technologies applied to the teaching of geography and the studies of detection and follow-up of forest fires in Mexico, Central America and South America; *History* backed the IV South American Congress on History as well as the works on regional comparative history as part of the bicentennial foundation of several American nations; and, finally in *Geophysics*, outstanding activities on seism tectonics and seismic risk in the border zone between Costa Rica and Panama and the study on debris and mud avalanches in specific areas of Peru.

During the quinquennium, a total of 147 projects were approved with Institute resources. Executed by 17 Member States they were worth a total of US$874,255. By adding the counterpart contributed by the bodies participating in the execution of the Program, the total value climbs to US$3,039,571. Although this result is far from the institutional plans and goals of the General Secretariat, it is positive as the Technical Assistance Program is close to the US$4 million fixed in 2004 as desirable.

Insofar as the distribution of the allocation of resources is concerned, for reasons directly related to the entrepreneurial status and capacity of the National Sections, Chile (34), Mexico (26) and Brazil (16) are assigned one out of every two projects that are approved (Graph 3).
The PAIGH’s contribution to human resource training and capacity building in the Member States is significant. During the quinquennium we backed 46 workshops and international courses and granted aid through a total of 396 partial or full grants that benefited all the Member States, although one out of every two grant recipients aided was from Ecuador (49), Chile (41), Mexico (37), Argentina (33) and Costa Rica (32) (Graph 4).
From the qualitative viewpoint, Program results are acceptable and in specific situations, even outstanding and relevant as they indicate our role and the importance of our contributions and leadership. An example of this would be spatial data infrastructure where, since 2001, we have financed 38 projects worth US$596,047. Another relevant example can be seen in the Commission on Geophysics which, on the subject of volcanology, in this quadrennium alone backed 12 projects worth a total of US$213,013.
4. Development of the Publications Program

Since 2005, the General Secretariat has produced its periodic and occasional publications with digital technology with very positive results and with the dedicated collaboration of the editors. The technology was incorporated into the process with great effectiveness. Production times, predetermined digital templates, costs and applied electronic media have translated into greater agility, budgetary economy and editorial efficiency.

Thus, production of almost 14,000 copies represents a significant “green production” corresponding to actual demand for production. Under conventional methods, the figure would have been close to 32,500 copies. In addition, the gap between production costs and income is smaller. Over the past four years total production costs have been estimated at $809,672 (Mexican pesos) and income at $539,696 (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Works</th>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Copies</th>
<th>Total worth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1,026</td>
<td>59,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2,266</td>
<td>105,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2,846</td>
<td>126,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2,268</td>
<td>161,936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3,265</td>
<td>181,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2,236</td>
<td>175,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>13,909</td>
<td>809,672</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Subscriptions and sales of publications, which had suffered a downturn between 2003 and 2004 basically as a consequence of the erratic appearance of the periodic publications, are recovering. In addition to reviving traditional commercialization mechanisms, the General Secretariat has entered into several licensing contracts with specialized intermediaries devoted to facilitate electronic
searches and the sale of articles from periodic journals. The Institute’s periodic publications are consulted by researchers, professors and students from many and eminent libraries and universities worldwide.

As a result, the General Secretariat, in agreement with the editors, believes it would be pertinent to persist on the initiative of evolving some of the periodic publications so that they can be part of a readily accessible online service. They would be available on the PAIGH website, or whatever other decision might be reached, at a cost through the companies licensed to sell the Institute’s academic products.

Occasional publications continue to be relevant for the Institute and act as an excellent alternative to increase penetration and presence in scientific and educational scenarios, while at the same time backing renowned and regular collaborators of the PAIGH (Box 1).

**Box 1**

*Occasional Publications Edited 2009*


*Historia Comparada de las Américas*, Patricia Galeana (Coordinators), 2009. (A Comparative History of the Americas)


*Relaciones interlatinoamericanas en los inicios del siglo XXI*, Adalberto Santana (Compilator), 2009. (Inter-Latin American Relations at the Start of the Twenty-First Century)

*Historia económica del Cono Sur de América (Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Paraguay y Uruguay). La era de las revoluciones y la independencia*, Hernán A. Silva (Director), in process. (An Economic History of the South Cone of the Americas - Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. The Age of Revolutions and Independence)

*El lado oscuro de la cooperación internacional. La discrecionalidad de la ayuda externa en el fomento de la democracia y los derechos humanos*, Juan Pablo Prado Lallande (Winner of the 2008 “Wallace W. Atwood” Award), 2009. (The Dark Side of International Cooperation: Discretionality of Foreign Aid in Backing Democracy and Human Rights)

The Periodic and Occasional Publications Program for 2009 was fulfilled very closely along the lines of our projections. With the publication of *Revista de Arqueología Americana* (Journal of the Archaeology of the Americas) Issue 26 we concluded the task we gave ourselves in 2008 of publishing a commemorative issue for each of the PAIGH periodic journals as part of the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Institute. Two occasional publications corresponding to projects backed by the Commission on History were also published on the occasion of the PAIGH anniversary. In the first, Patricia Galeana compiled the presentations of the First International Symposium on a *Historia Comparada de las Américas* (Comparative History of the Americas) in a single volume. This is the first of a series of volumes which was jointly published with the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) through the Center for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CIALC) and the Center for Research on North America (CISAN). In the second, Boris Berenzen and Georgina Calderón edited the “Diccionario Tiempo Espacio” (*Time Space Dictionary*), to commemorate the Institute’s 80th anniversary. They also coordinated a series entitled *Historia de la Historiografía de América 1950-2000* (History of the Historiography of the Americas: 1950-2000), of which the first volume has been published. Both titles are the result of activities financed by the Technical Assistance Program Project entitled “Construcción del Tiempo-Espacio. Visiones y revisiones desde América” (Building Time-Space: Visions and Reviews from the Americas) and have been co-published with the UNAM through its Schools of Science (the *Diccionario*) and of Philosophy and Literature (*Historia de la Historiografía*).

The PAIGH continues to promptly deliver to the ENAH those publications gathered in exchanges and that enrich the fund. As of December 31, 2009 the total number of issues in the fund was 228,993.

**Periodic Publications of the PAIGH**
5. **2010-2020 Pan American Agenda for the advancement of the PAIGH**

At the 40th Meeting of the Directing Council (Colombia, 2007) Resolution V was taken to develop a PAIGH agenda for the following decade consisting of achievable aims and goals in order to optimize compliance with institutional missions and project the work of the institution as a mechanism that fosters regional integration. During the 41st Meeting of the Directing Council (El Salvador, 2008) Resolution 3 was taken to approve the bases, principles and aims for the Agenda and at the 19th General Assembly (Ecuador, 2009) Resolution 4 was approved, which established the parameters for its execution, development and assessment. The aim is to innovate and make the scientific work of the Institute relevant. This could be the case for key issues such as climate change, vulnerability and risks associated with natural disasters, geographic information infrastructure, territorial organization and regional integration.

The Agenda should make meaningful contributions to:

- The modernization of National Sections and emphasize the sense of corresponsability with the Institute
- The institutional development of organizations connected to the production of continental geographic information
- Increasing regional participation from a multidisciplinary perspective
- A more efficient relationship between the PAIGH and related international organizations and
- The consolidation of the Network that will effectively integrate the Pan American community, particularly the new generations in the Member States

6. **Compliance with Resolutions of the General Assembly and Directing Councils**

During the quinquennium we approved a total of 139 resolutions between the 18th General Assembly and the Directing Councils, 97 of which refer to substantive provisions of a regulatory, administrative or institutional policy nature. Another 50 correspond to protocol-related provisions, including awards, acknowledgements and so on.

The General Secretariat has ensured strict compliance of each Resolution and can state that they have been fully executed. It is nonetheless, worth noting that some have a multiannual scope and others bear special circumstances worthy of mention that affect their implementation in one way or
another. Take the specific case of Resolution 7 from 2005, “Border Vicinity Zones”. In order to implement this Resolution, the General Secretariat contacted the OAS and the Mexican government to formally consult with them on their availability to back explicit proposals. The OAS, through its Crisis Management Office, indicated that although it was interested in the initiative at the time it did not have the resources to back its implementation. As this option was not viable, we have had to change the content to submit a new proposal to the Member States and especially the government of Mexico, which expressed an interest in collaborating on the matter.

Atlántida Coll (Mexico), Mariano Zamorano (Argentina), Antonio Introcaso (Argentina), and Michael L. Conniff (United States of America) were awarded with the “2009 PAIGH Pan American Medal”, for their contributions to cartography, history, geography and geophysics in the Americas

7. Inter-Institutional Relations

During the quinquennium we signed formal agreements with States, international organizations and national bodies that contribute to the mission of the PAIGH and the projection of its vision. Amongst other covenants and agreements entered into with international and national organizations directly related to the Institute and its ends, the following stand out:

- The International Cartographic Association - ICA
- The International Standards Organization - ISO TC/211
- The Association of American Geographers - AAG
- The National Geographic Institute of Spain - IGN
8. National Sections of the PAIGH

For the PAIGH to develop effectively, it requires strong, operating National Sections. Several Resolutions establish the parameters of their operation and development. At the 18th General Assembly and especially at the 39th Meeting of the Directing Council (Chile, 2006) we approved salient provisions on the subject.

One of the permanent aims of the General Secretariat has been to persevere at:

- Encouraging more cooperation and integration amongst National Sections
- Consolidating the decentralization of the PAIGH as an operational and functional model
- Fostering greater participation and more solid local leadership
- Increasing the number of participating active bodies in each National Section
- Recommending the establishment of simple and effective structures seeking concrete results
- Making the work and contributions of each National Section relevant
- Consistently instilling the Pan American mission and vision in them

**Annual Meeting of the National Section of the PAIGH in Chile (2008)**  
**Members of the Commission on Geography from the National Section of the PAIGH in the Dominican Republic**
9. Relations with the OAS, including Canada and the Caribbean

The General Secretariat and members of the Institute have endeavored to secure and project ideal relations with the OAS, not only in its role as coordinator of the Inter-American System but also because of its potential to aid the PAIGH in the development of the Pan American Agenda. In addition, the OAS can especially be helpful in backing the process of integrating English-speaking countries, such as Canada and the Caribbean, into the Institute. In spite of the efforts undertaken with CARICOM (Caribbean Community) and the government of Canada, progress achieved does not correspond to the expectations of the PAIGH.

Worthy of mention is also the support provided by PAIGH to the activities developed in the Adjacent Zone between Guatemala and Belize both in capacity building and in technical support provided to the OAS Mission in the area subject to controversy.

For the 80th Anniversary of the PAIGH, the 37th General Assembly of the OAS (Panama, 2007) approved Resolution 2328 with content, vis a vis the Twenty-First Century, that is relevant as it highlights the contribution of the Institute to the Inter-American System and the significance of its existence and potential for contributing to regional development.
Box 2

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AG/RES. 2328 (XXXVII O/07)

COMMEMORATION OF THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY (PAIGH)

(Adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 5, 2007)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

CONSIDERING:

That the Sixth International Conference of American States, held on February 7, 1928, approved the establishment of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), with its permanent headquarters in Mexico City;

That on January 12, 1949, the Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the PAIGH signed an agreement to determine the ties between the two bodies, thus making the Institute the oldest specialized organization of the OAS;

That relations between the organizations are now governed by the agreement signed on May 6, 1974, which highlights the Institute’s role as an advisory body to the OAS, on the basis of its technical autonomy and in keeping with its mandates;

That, since its inception, the PAIGH has made noteworthy contributions to understanding, analyzing, and investigating the geography and history of the Hemisphere as the common heritage of the peoples of the Americas, by means of an array of initiatives, technical assistance projects, training programs, and the applications of training results-accomplishments that reaffirm the direct link between knowledge of the territory, environmental and geophysical conditions, and opportunities for economic and social growth; and

That innovations in information technologies, the mounting volume of data describing territory, and information systems give geography, as a science used to improve the quality of life of people and their biophysical environment, new and significant roles to play in project design, decision-making, science, and technology, all of which points up the importance to the inter-American system of an organization like the PAIGH,

RESOLVES:

1. To declare June 24, 2008, as the day commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH); and to encourage member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) to participate actively in its celebration.

2. To that end, to invite the OAS member states and permanent observers to consider making voluntary and special contributions to the OAS, aimed at establishing a specific fund to finance PAIGH projects related to: (i) spatial data production, access, and use to improve disaster response; (ii) consolidation of territorial databases in each country as part of the infrastructure needed for adequate environmental, social, and economic development; and (iii) The Americas: Contact and
Independence, an initiative being prepared concurrently with the commemoration of the bicentennial of the founding of most nations of the Americas.

3. To recommend to member states that, in the course of institution-building and development of related capacities, they strengthen the geographic identity of the respective existing agencies and, in particular, the maintenance and integrity of cartographic databases containing basic data for each country, in keeping with international parameters fostering their use in the formulation of regional projects.

4. To call upon OAS member states that have not yet done so to consider establishing formal ties with the PAIGH, in order to further their development and the organization’s contribution to the inter-American system as a whole.
10. GeoSUR Program

In 2005, the General Secretariat submitted a proposal to the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) that would foster the development of online supranational geographic products or the production of a new Virtual Map of the Americas. The proposition, focused on Central America in the initial phase, was not accepted because the Bank could not contribute non-reimbursable regional cooperation funds to the OAS and the PAIGH as part of the Inter-American System.

In 2006, the Andean Development Corporation (CAF) decided to undertake the “GeoSUR Program” project, initially targeting the Corporation’s Member Countries in South America. In this endeavor, the following have come together: the CAF, the USGS/EROS (the US Geological Survey’s EROS Data Center) and the PAIGH; initially, the IABIN also participated. The launch of the GeoSUR Program took place in Brasilia within the framework of the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) on March 19, 2007. Within GeoSUR human resource training activities at participating geographic institutes have taken place, technological assistance has been provided and online services have been developed. The GeoSUR Program has also gradually consolidated itself as an initiative that makes significant contributions to the development of the region’s spatial data infrastructures by means of the implementation of a decentralized network of geoservers. It has also introduced a geointegrating server that allows the regional visualization of the data available on national geoservers. In addition, it has backed the production of fundamental spatial data in participating countries and regional infrastructure maps, as well as other maps.

GeoSUR Program Portal
11. Developing the PAIGH’s Communication Infrastructure: The Pan American Network of Professionals and our Website

We have often remarked on the pertinence of the PAIGH augmenting the visibility of its operations and the need to create an effective network for communication amongst specialists in their varied fields. We have evolved to a more dynamic page that provides information to the Pan American community in a more efficient manner. On average we get 16,000 quality visits per month (Graph 5). Use of the website as a means of communication by the Member States of the PAIGH however, is still limited and has significant variations.

**Graph 5**

**Monthly Visits to the PAIGH Website**

**January - December 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Unique Visitors</th>
<th>Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January, 2009</td>
<td>9,312</td>
<td>12,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February, 2009</td>
<td>10,513</td>
<td>15,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 2009</td>
<td>14,174</td>
<td>18,412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April, 2009</td>
<td>10,508</td>
<td>14,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 2009</td>
<td>12,474</td>
<td>18,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 2009</td>
<td>11,573</td>
<td>17,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July, 2009</td>
<td>9,499</td>
<td>14,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 2009</td>
<td>11,773</td>
<td>15,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 2009</td>
<td>13,722</td>
<td>19,640</td>
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<td>October, 2009</td>
<td>14,777</td>
<td>21,611</td>
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<td>November, 2009</td>
<td>12,050</td>
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<td>December, 2009</td>
<td>10,433</td>
<td>15,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>140,117</td>
<td>199,765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2004, we went from our old database to the Pan American Network of Professionals. It is a voluntary registration network which has provided better service. It consists of 750 specialists distributed among the four Technical Commissions of the PAIGH, with a majority participation (35.7%) of geographers (Graph 7). Distribution figures per country point to good coverage although 65% of effective participation is concentrated in Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Chile and Peru (Graph 8).
12. Cooperation with the National Geographic Institute of Spain

The Institute has four permanent observer countries: Spain, France, Jamaica and Israel. It is with Spain though, that we have close historical and very profitable ties.

In late 2005 we signed a new Cooperation Agreement with the National Geographic Institute of Spain with excellent results in several fields. For example, we have organized a series of annual courses with them aimed at training human resources in spatial data (in which we instructed 250 professionals from the region). We have also backed publications and exhibitions, as well as the establishment of a new initiative: the Ibero-American Network of Geographic Information Infrastructures (R3IGeo) which will serve as a framework for other cooperation projects.

The course entitled “Satellite Image Interpretation” is rotated every year among the offices of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) in Antigua (Guatemala), Cartagena (Colombia) and Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia) and 107 specialists participated in these between 2004 and 2009. As for publications, they assisted with the printing of the PAIGH’s 80th Anniversary commemorative edition América: Contacto e Independencia (America: Contact and Independence) and recently, the itinerant exhibition by the same name. Last but not least, for the first time we held the “José Joaquín Hungría Morell” PAIGH institutional course on Geographic Names in Madrid, Spain.
The Constitution Act of the R3IGeo was subscribed on November 18, 2009 in the framework of the 24th International Conference of the International Cartographic Association (ICA), met in Santiago, Chile. The Constitution Act of the Network was subscribed by the Director General of the National Geographic Institute of Spain, Alberto Sereno and the PAIGH’s Secretary General, Santiago Borrero

13. The Pan American Laboratory for the Observation of Natural Disasters

As a consequence of Resolution 4 of the 41st Directing Council (El Salvador, 2008) and in view of the results of the project backed by the Commissions on Geography and Geophysics “Detection and Follow-Up of Forest Fires in Mexico and Central America”, undertaken under the responsibility of Mexico’s National Meteorological Service, the initiative to develop a Pan American Laboratory for the Observation of Natural Disasters at PAIGH headquarters has gotten the backing of the Mexican government and is currently in the design planning stage. The main goal, at least in the initial stage, is to develop a multidisciplinary analysis of risks and situations connected to specific disasters that are not necessarily on the regional agenda of priorities in order to attract the attention of academicians, specialists, related bodies and bilateral and multilateral aid institutions.

It is not a matter of duplicating efforts already underway. The PAIGH will first of all facilitate the establishment of a Pan American network of specialists, capacity building through workshops and short courses and a virtual documentation center to back scientific activities.
14. **PAIGH Contributions to the Application of Standards in the Production of Spatial Data and to the Development of SDI in the Region**

Standards are key in the development of Spatial Data Infrastructures in each Member State and allow for the interoperability of data at all levels and the generation of supranational projects. In the past, the PAIGH has advanced the adoption of standards in the region. Now though, the fact is that globalization has made organizations such as the ISO and the OGC (Open Geospatial Consortium) develop standards that have become international regulations. At the national level however, application and adoption of these standards varies and in the fields of spatial data documentation (metadata) and access to essential information in available databases (clearinghouses) there are, and will continue to be, situations that reflect what specialists prefer or local circumstances that should also be documented in order to facilitate access and interoperability of data to different ends linked to the comprehensive development of the region. With that aim in mind and, in keeping with its role since 2004, the Institute, together with competent international bodies, has led a regional initiative called the Latin American Metadata Profile (LAMP) whose objective it is to properly document spatial information and make it possible to access the characteristics of the documentation of the data of each Member State without restriction regarding its use by users. In this context and with the collaboration of a group of national and international organizations we made momentous progress with this initiative which is expected to be generalized as of 2010. With this in mind, and with the goal of promoting the international standards the ISO issues through its ISO TC/211 Committee (Geographic Information/Geomatics) among the specialized Spanish-speaking community in a manner consistent with its mandate, the PAIGH has, with the collaboration of the aforementioned Committee, translated them into Spanish, published them and distributed the ISO Standards Guide.

15. **Statutory Matters and Meetings**

In 2009, the planned Statutory Meetings were held:

- 71st Meeting of Officers (Ecuador, 29-30 June)
- II Work Session of PAIGH’s 2010-2020 Pan American Agenda (México, 28-29 September)
- 72nd Meeting of Officers (Ecuador, 25 October)
- Consultative Technical Meetings of the Commissions of PAIGH (Ecuador, 26-27 October)
- 19th General Assembly (Ecuador, 28-30 October)

At the 19th General Assembly (Ecuador, 2009), the Member States elected the following Officers for the 2009-2013 period:

President: Hector Pena (Argentina)
Vice-president: Bruce Presgrave (United States of America)
Secretary General: Santiago Borrero (Colombia)
Chairwoman of the Cartography Commission: Alejandra Coll (Chile)
Chairman of the Geography Commission: Mario Reyes (Mexico)
Chairwoman of the History Commission: Maria Cristina Mineiro (Brazil)
Chairman of the Geophysics Commission: Walter Fernandez (Costa Rica)
At the General Assembly, the venues for the forthcoming Directing Council Meetings were also agreed:

2010 Lima, Peru (42nd Meeting of the Directing Council)
2011 Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (43rd Meeting of the Directing Council)
2012 Buenos Aires, Argentina (44th Meeting of the Directing Council)
2013 Montevideo, Uruguay (20th General Assembly)
2014 Port au Prince, Haiti (45th Meeting of the Directing Council)
16. Situation of Haiti and quadrennial prospective of PAIGH

In 2010, actions connected to the first year of execution of the “2010-2020 Pan Americana Agenda” comprise the core activities of the PAIGH. However, the earthquake that devastated Haiti, a Member State of the Institute, on February 12, has led us to reconsider some priorities. Bearing in mind the characteristics and objectives of the PAIGH it is limited what can be done in the short term and during the initial phase of recovery after the earthquake. Nonetheless, in the aftermath of the tragedy, we have focused on knowing in detail the situation affecting the community linked to earth sciences and history in Haiti. The premature passing away of the Chairwoman of the National Section of PAIGH and Director of the National Center of Geospatial Information (CNIGS) and the way in which the work of the Academy on Geography and History has been affected, constitute the bases upon which, in the short and medium term, PAIGH will organize its support in order to recover the dynamics of the professional network linked to the spatial and temporal sciences, the recuperation of the operational capacity and the associated capacity building activities that will serve for the work of Haitian professionals in the sciences of interest to PAIGH. The goal is to maintain support to the proposal to hold the 45 Directing Council Meeting of PAIGH in Haiti in the year 2014 and to contribute in a significant manner, so that both the Academy and the CNIGS, be by then in full productive capacity.

Gina Porcena Meneus, Chairwoman of the PAIGH’s National Section in Haiti and Director General of the Center, passed away due to the earthquake

Haiti’s CNIGS building after the earthquake

Photo: Desmond Dougall - MapAction LAC

Almost at the closing of this report, a devastating earthquake of 8.8 in the Richter scale took place with serious consequences for the people of Concepción and the Chilean economy. In the workshop on “Territorial Ordering and Natural Disasters” to be held in Lima, Peru, in the framework of the 42nd Meeting of the Directing Council of PAIGH, special technical and scientific attention will be devoted to the events that devastated significant sections of Chile and Haiti. PAIGH’s solidarity is herewith offered to the government and peoples of the affected Member States.