

A STRATEGIC VISION OF THE OAS

SECOND PRESENTATION

I.- INTRODUCTION

Just over one year ago, I submitted to the Permanent Council a document entitled “A Strategic Vision of the OAS” for consideration by the member states. The principal purpose of that document was to trigger a dialogue that would lead to a better definition of priorities in the work of the Organization. It sought, therefore, as its Introduction pointed out, to respond to a common demand of the member states *“that we work more efficiently as the premier forum for discussions on the hemispheric issues that constitute the essence of the Organization.”*

Systematic discussion of the contents of that document is still pending. There was, as everyone will recall, a prolonged debate lasting several months on the methodology for analyzing it, which prevented progress on the substance of the matter. The delay stems from the fact that the dialogue proposed is complex, because it involves forging consensus around the visions, interests, and intent of a mixed group of dissimilar countries. If there are too many mandates in the OAS and it is therefore necessary to establish priorities, it is because at some point those mandates were approved by the member states and were, and continue to be, very important for them.

However, one year later, and after the latest and difficult budget debate, which once again was reduced to an exercise in making numbers add up, with scant reference to policies, in my opinion the discussion on matters of substance can no longer be postponed. As I said at the Special Session of the General Assembly, held at the end of last year, we cannot keep on saying that we will do it next year; this is NEXT YEAR and it is essential that decisions be taken. At the last meeting of the Permanent Council in 2012 the subject was brought up once again with a view to an effective discussion of the issue in the first few months of 2013.

This paper supplements the Vision presented last year, with a particular emphasis on the political aspects, which I regard as the core aspects in today’s debate. Although I repeat certain ideas, I have tried to add elements to them that justify their description as a “vision,” while refraining from putting forward partial solutions or magical recipes. In that I am guided solely by my intention to orient the discussion in the Council through ideas that are always open to debate and subject to your approval or rejection.

II.- BACKGROUND

In recent months, numerous opinions have been publicly voiced regarding the OAS. Many of them contain criticisms that we would do well to take into account in order to improve our performance. Some points of convergence (not yet, I would say, points of consensus) have also emerged that are worth analyzing in detail.

1. The Ongoing Relevance of the OAS

The debate about whether the OAS is still relevant has taken on fresh impetus, above all since the emergence of new regional organizations and communities, some of which are presented as “alternatives to the OAS.”

Today, regional organizations play a central role that the hemispheric Organization cannot cover alone. Economic integration is happening not in the Hemisphere as a whole, but rather in the various subregions. Latin America and the Caribbean grew in the first decade of this century more than they had grown in the 1980’s and 1990s combined, and for that reason, they, too, aspire to a place in the concert of nations.

Nevertheless, I do not believe that regional bodies can be regarded as genuine alternatives to a hemispheric organization if that organization has a clear notion of its true missions.

UNASUR is a long-awaited regional body, bringing together the countries of South America, in much the same way as the Central American Integration System (SICA) or CARICOM have done for the countries in those areas, starting several years prior to UNASUR. Especially when it comes to integration, America is a continent of regions, and the stronger those regional processes are the better the outlook for development for the countries in those regions.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) is a forum for political dialogue among the countries of those two regions, geared to strengthening their presence and actions in international scenarios and engaging in dialogue with other parts of the world. Although at one time, it might have been preferable for those activities to have been part of a hemispheric endeavor, the truth of the matter is that, for some of the players involved, especially in North America, there was never any desire to coordinate policies at that level. In fact, CELAC broadens what already existed in the United Nations, namely the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), and it does not encroach on the activities of any other hemispheric body.

The existence of these organizations does not, therefore, pose a challenge to the OAS. The real challenge as far as legitimacy is concerned comes from within the Organization and from the will of its member states.

Now, more than ever before, there exists a Hemispheric Agenda, which includes a set of items that concern the Americas as a whole and that cannot be addressed in isolation by just some of

the member states. Like the IDB, ECLAC, and other hemispheric bodies, the OAS justifies its existence because of the existence of strong, vigorous, and, generally speaking, sound relations within the inter-American system.

A number of facts and reasons explain the existence of a common hemispheric agenda:

- a. For instance, trade statistics point not just to an important volume of trade between North America and the rest of the Hemisphere; they also show balanced trade relations. The United States continues to be, by far, the leading foreign investor in Latin America. Several of our countries are, in addition, key providers of most of the natural resources needed in the Americas and our diverse mineral and environmental wealth allows us to be highly optimistic about the future.
- b. We are increasingly bound together, moreover, by demographic, cultural and social ties that shape our agenda. Nobody can think of migration, for instance, without reference to the hemispheric framework, given that most migration is still from South to North. The United States is now the third largest Latin country, after Mexico and Brazil, and the Latin contingent is only going to get bigger in the coming decades.
- c. Our countries have coexisted in peace for over a century and, for the first time since independence, all of them are home to effective democracies, even though undoubtedly they can be perfected. Never before have we shared so many values in the political sphere. America today is one of two democratic continents in the world.

Nevertheless, we also have a region that is more diverse than it was, in terms of the size of its members, their history and wealth, and the aspirations of those countries in the concert of nations. These developments have generated much more self-esteem in the countries of the region, inducing them to act with greater autonomy: an important factor to take into account. Self-determination has been a principle proclaimed in the OAS Charter from the start, but it is easier to call for now when all the member states have governments legitimized by the sovereign will of their peoples. Representing that diversity of actors and interests, while maintaining unity among them all, poses an enormous challenge.

We do indeed need a common agenda, because the issues of democracy, human rights, trade, migration, and crime continue to be hemispheric in scope. However, we cannot address them in the same way as we did several decades ago. The hegemonies of old are now neither useful nor acceptable, as President Barack Obama pointed out at the Fifth Summit of the Americas. “I don’t want to make policies for you, but with you.” That common agenda is the first great challenge for today’s OAS and one that, unfortunately, is still pending.

The OAS Charter itself clearly states that all independent American states that ratify it are members of the Organization and that imposes on us the obligation to be **inclusive**. We want all

independent countries in the Americas, the 35 states, to be members of the Organization and to feel comfortable in it, to feel that they own it.

To that we have added, since 2001, the commitment to **democracy**. This is an obligation that has to do with our domestic policies, but it is one that all the countries of America freely assumed, thereby converting that form of political organization into a condition for staying in the system.

An inclusive organization, made up of sovereign, diverse countries legitimized by democracy, working on an equal footing to advance the same hemispheric agenda, is what the OAS stands for in the 21st century; an organization very different from the one imposed on us by the Cold War.

2. Continuity and Change in the Inter-American System

It is a mistake to think that because the OAS is the oldest international organization in the world it is reluctant to change. On the contrary, if our Organization (the continuation of the Pan American Union) has lasted so many years through so many changes in the region and in the world, it is because of its capacity to adapt to new circumstances. Faced with new circumstances, the OAS has not remained anchored to the past. Rather, it has generated new proposals at every stage and forged new institutions, such as the Pan American Health Organization and the Inter-American Commission of Women in the first half of the last century, or the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in 1959. At the same time it has developed one of the world's richest bodies of law. The OAS is the depositary of more than 200 international treaties and 6,000 bilateral cooperation agreements, making it the guardian of all the important laws in effect in the Hemisphere. That is one of its principal strengths.

Our hemispheric organization has undergone several changes:

- a. The first major shift was, of course, the transition from Pan American Union to Organization of the American States (OAS) in 1948. As the Cold War began, the first pillar of the new system was the signing of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty) in 1947, followed, in 1948, by the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (the first declaration on this subject in the world, months before the Universal Declaration), the Pact of Bogota on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, and the OAS Charter. All these instruments far surpassed the obligations and designs of the Pan American Union and they shaped the initial years of the OAS, in which external defense became paramount, to a point at which it was invoked to legitimize interference in the internal affairs of states, thereby transgressing the Charter itself.

Nevertheless, that framework also ensured that our Hemisphere became the most peaceful since the Second World War and, at the same time, the region that submitted most cases to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. This demonstrates that we solve our disputes through legal means, negotiation, mediation, and arbitration or by resorting to the ICJ.

- b. The OAS shifted course again at the end of the 1950s, when it attached more importance to development issues, which had been postponed in 1948. Although the Alliance for Progress is often highlighted as the fundamental change in this regard, the truth is that the Inter-American Development Bank was founded before the Alliance and it was established within the OAS framework. It provided an ingredient that had been missing since 1948 and was now right at the forefront. The IDB, which “was more than a bank,” as Felipe Herrera liked to say, would subsequently expand further into the great institution we all know today.
- c. A decade and a half later, the OAS again adapted to new circumstances, this time with respect to human rights. The Commission on Human Rights received only a brief mention in the OAS Charter, when its main task was first seen as “promoting” human rights. However, in the face of the dictatorships in South America and the civil wars in Central America, “defending” human rights became a more pressing and important concern. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Commission on Human Rights took on a much more central role than it had played hitherto, giving rise to a system that included the American Convention on Human Rights. Nobody had imagined that the Commission on Human Rights would turn out to be what it in fact became and surely almost no one had envisaged the existence of an American Convention on Human Rights, the Treaty of San José of 1969, or the establishment of a Court whose jurisdiction was mandatory, all of which would expand the scope of our human rights activities.

Thus, the human rights pillar of our Organization remained, but, like the development pillar, too, its nature had changed.

- d. With the end of the Cold War, the politics pillar also changed. That was the upshot of many other factors, including the entry into the Organization of a set of new member states (Canada and the Caribbean countries), which brought with them fairly robust democratic traditions and convictions; the democratization of South America; and the end to the civil wars in Central America, all of which helped shape this new environment.

Without neglecting the major issues of peace, peaceful settlement of disputes, self-determination, and non-intervention, the OAS also immersed itself in the core issue of commitment to democracy. Starting with Resolution 1080, adopted at the General Assembly session held in Santiago, Chile, in 1991, the Charter was amended through the Protocols of Managua and

Washington, which some countries have still not ratified, supplementing changes agreed to in the Protocol of Cartagena de Indias of 1985.

All this would eventually lead to the signing of the Inter-American Democratic Charter in 2001, in which democracy ceases to be a merely rhetorical aspiration and asserts itself as a commitment among sovereign states: “The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it,” reads the first article of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

- e. Finally, with respect to security, there was another major shift, which would practically set aside or marginalize collective security instruments vis-à-vis external threats in favor of a multidimensional approach favoring cooperation to confront internal threats posed by drug trafficking and organized crime, along with other hazards such as pandemics and natural disasters.

The Rio Treaty philosophy had inspired the overthrow of Arbenz in Guatemala, the suspension of Cuba, the invasion of the Dominican Republic, and the silence that greeted the coups d'état in Chile, Argentina, and other countries. But times changed and the 1982 war in the South Atlantic triggered a crisis from which that philosophy would never recover. The instruments still exist, but the Rio Treaty subsists only formally and external security issues are now much less important in the Organization today than they were when those instruments were drawn up in 1947.

The 2003 Special Conference on Security, held in Mexico, also took up the security challenge and managed to change the system. Even before it, the establishment of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE), and, later on, the establishment of the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security all forged a more promising approach to tackling today's challenges. The agreements reached at the last, Sixth, Summit of the Americas on combating drug trafficking and organized crime are now the main focus of this pillar within the OAS.

In short, despite the talk of “continuity” in the “pillars” of the Organization, the contents beneath the headings have changed substantively and we have transformed the Organization much more radically than is sometimes recognized. The inter-American system's strength has not been sapped. Rather it demonstrates its ability to adapt to new circumstances.

3. Political Dialogue Should Guide Administrative and Financial Issues

Political dialogue about how to adapt our Organization to meet current demands is an arduous task that has been systematically avoided in favor of debate focusing almost exclusively on

specific topics relating to administrative and budgetary management, rather than an in-depth discussion of what we want from this Organization. How to improve management and maximize the use of resources is naturally an important and necessary part of the debate, but that concern does not justify eluding discussion of the deeper issues at stake. That has led to strategic matters being addressed from an administrative and budgetary angle, thereby precluding conclusions based on a medium and long-term vision.

We need to stop addressing partial symptoms while postponing decisions on the root causes. Reducing discussion to administrative and budgetary topics, to a point at which there is even mention of *administrative paralysis*, a term that is false and harmful to the OAS, leads us to imagine that by resolving such matters we will somehow breathe new life into the OAS. That just lets us continue to avoid a strategic dialogue, based on a long-term vision, which would enable us to seek agreement on the major hemispheric issues and refine consensus on what the member states expect from their hemispheric Organization.

Moreover, the problems with the Organization's finances are nothing new and have been analyzed many times. When I took over the OAS General Secretariat there was talk, just as there had been in previous decades, of a "terminal crisis." I still remember Luigi Einaudi's remarks when he passed on to me the duties that he had discharged with such efficiency and self-sacrifice at a time of political difficulty.

"Unfortunately, though our structure is renewed, our finances are still in disrepair. It is as though our great ship had no maintenance for its engines and nothing more for sails than patchwork rags fit for an aging catamaran. Even with the savings achieved by the restructuring process, and even if existing quotas are paid in full and on time, income does not meet minimal operating requirements. The human rights system has been underfunded for years, but the sad truth is that today, not merely the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development, but all areas of the Organization, from Human Rights to Security, Democracy and support for the political bodies and for the Offices in the Member States, lack adequate resources."

Luigi Einaudi knew what he was talking about, having spent many years at the Organization, variously as a senior State Department official, Permanent Representative of his country, and Assistant Secretary General. His analysis was correct then and remains so today: without money to repair the engines or change the sails, the ship's headway will become increasingly labored.

That analysis also concurs with the conclusions of our Board of External Auditors, with the auditor of the Department of State at its head. Every year, the Board advises the Permanent Council to adopt decisions with a view to achieving one of two things: either increase the contributions from member states, or reduce the areas in which the General Secretariat works. In

recent years I have presented very clear proposals to the Permanent Council on those two courses of action.¹

The 2013 program-budget was negotiated in such a setting devoid of any discussion of the core issues. Effectively, the result was another reduction, which will inevitably translate into dismissals of staff. That has become a trend now, because 13 Regular Fund positions were eliminated in 2010, 45 in 2011, 18 in 2012, and now 22 more in 2013, bringing the total number of staff members down from 547 to 449, an 18% cut in just the last four years. At the same time, paradoxically, expenditure is still structured in such a way that key activities of the Organization continue to be largely paid for out of voluntary funds. Take, for example, electoral observation; the work of the Inter-American Commission and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights; the missions to resolve political crises, such as the one to Paraguay; the study on drug trafficking requested by the Presidents in the framework of the Sixth Summit of the Americas; and others.

In spite of everything, the OAS is not in an economic crisis and we are still in time to halt the attrition caused by mounting costs without a corresponding rise in income. The OAS has neither a budget deficit, nor outstanding debts. There is no emergency; however, there is a pressing need for rationality that we cannot put off any longer.

III.- POLICY PROPOSAL

I believe that there is broad agreement on two fundamental premises to guide our work. If we could start by ratifying those two premises, we could then build our operational plans on them:

A.- The reform that we need involves a straightforward choice: i) if what is wanted is to continue the work that the Organization currently does, then a programmed increase in the amount of resources available is needed; ii) if there is no appetite to increase quotas, then it is essential to scale back the activities that the OAS carries out. Of course, one option could also be a partial increase in funding, combined with a more moderate scaling back of activities.

B.- If it is decided to focus the activities of the Organization more narrowly, then that should be done leaving intact, where possible, the work connected with the four pillars of the

¹ However, in the intervening years between then and the end of the decade there was no ostensible need to institute changes. During my first term, all the countries that had significant quota arrearages in 2006 brought themselves up to date, thus generating above-average revenues. Although that bonanza came to an end in 2010, at the time there was no appetite to cut programs, which adversely affected our reserves. It is worth noting, however, that in recent years, member states, with a very few exceptions, have continued to pay their quotas regularly, which has enabled us to operate with balanced budgets.

institution: political (democracy and conflict resolution), human rights, integral development, and security (in particular, public security).

These two positions are set out in the first Strategic Vision document. What follows is intended as a complement to that text.

1.- Increased Funding

Increasing funding would require reviewing and raising the quota assessments scale, which has only happened twice in the past decade, and then only very slightly. Therefore, assuming that there is no appetite to make concerted increases of a particular magnitude, I have proposed two paths:

a. A resolution that would make it possible to raise the quotas in an amount equivalent to the cost-of-living increases that the OAS has to make whenever the salaries of its employees go up in line with the United Nations cost-of-living adjustment. This proposal would not increase the amount of funds available for new programs; however, it would at least stop the resources of the OAS from declining annually in real terms, as has been happening almost invariably for nearly three decades, precluding the need for further lay-offs.

b. A change in the quota assessments structure whereby the country that puts up the largest contribution (United States pays for 60% of the regular budget) continues to pay the same amount, but that amount would be equivalent to only 49% of total, while the other member states would increase their contributions to make up the remaining 51%.

A number of other ideas have also recently emerged about how to bring in more resources without increasing countries' contributions. One such is to resort to private contributions, especially from charities, foundations, or NGOs that engage in activities similar to those of the OAS. I believe that an initiative of this type could serve for a number of ancillary activities, such as the Museum of the Americas, the Columbus Memorial Library, or actual charitable work performed by the Pan American Development Foundation, the Young Americas Business Trust, or the Trust for the Americas. However, in my opinion, seeking private funds to finance work on our core pillars is both inappropriate and unlikely: This is an organization of states and, as such, it should be capable of financing its own work. Furthermore, I cannot conceive of activities such as protection of human rights, electoral observation, drug abuse control, or implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter being privately funded.

The second idea is to increase the size of the voluntary specific funds in a number of respects. In this regard, I recently suggested that the Oliver Jackman Voluntary Capital Fund to Finance the Inter-American Human Rights System might be expanded through a special contribution from

member states, and that permanent observer countries might also be invited to do likewise in order to help contribute to a larger and stable source of funding for the Inter-American Commission and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. While it would be hard to imagine specific funds for all activities, I believe that in areas such as human rights or scholarships, it would be feasible to consider contributions of this nature.

Another idea that was mooted some time ago, which I would like to repeat now, is the creation of two separate observer categories, acknowledging the reality that some of our current observers contribute substantively to OAS programs, while others limit themselves to a minimal presence. Hence the talk of a special category of so-called “associate members,” which would be countries from other regions willing to commit to a more permanent kind of support or a specific contribution, reserving the category of “observer” to those with a more limited involvement.

2.- Rationalization of functions:

If the Organization’s revenue is not increased in one of these ways, or in any other that the member states care to propose, the only other option would be to concentrate the Organization’s work areas, reducing the many mandates from the General Assembly and the Summits of the Americas in line with certain policy approaches agreed upon by the member states.

A year ago, in my “Strategic Vision,” I proposed two specific approaches:

- 1.- To allocate Regular Fund resources exclusively to carrying out our core tasks, and with respect to other activities that the member states might wish to entrust to the Organization, create specific funds in each instance to finance them.
- 2.- To examine the content of each task to determine if the OAS is the organization best placed in the inter-American system to carry it out, and if not, identify potential opportunities for partnership with other agencies of the system in order to implement them, allocating our resources in a more efficient and rational manner.

The rationale for the first of these approaches is well known. For a long time the OAS has been the central organization of the inter-American system to which all the sectoral proposals that our governments make for cooperating in different fields are addressed. That much is reflected in the large number of ministerial meetings that we serve as permanent secretariat. However, it has also given rise to the Organization’s own decentralized bodies that answer neither to the General Assembly nor to the Permanent Council, but which we must, nevertheless, house and finance. The proposal is to review the effective ongoing validity of those agencies; in other words, to determine if they still enjoy the support of the relevant ministries in each member state, and

examine with them possibilities for setting up special funds to finance their work without overburdening the main OAS budget.²

Preliminary talks have already been held with defense ministers about the Inter-American Defense Board, with port authorities about the Inter-American Committee on Ports, and with the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission, among other bodies. However, those discussions were only very partially reflected in this year's budget and we must consolidate our policy in that regard.

The second approach proposed entails recognizing that the prioritization of mandates at the OAS depends not only on the importance of those mandates in absolute terms, but also on the possibility of their making a **significant contribution**. It will be impossible to reduce anything without applying this approach. No one could argue that a program on preschool education or water management is not important – that would be absurd. The real question lies elsewhere: *Does the work of the OAS in this area make a difference? Is it of significant use to member states?*

When we consider the general thrust of the statements made by most member states, we find an apparent consensus that the so-called “pillars” constitute the Organization's core tasks: political (peace and democracy), human rights, development, and security. However, this formula is too broad and if the aim is to harness the concept, a more profound analysis of each pillar is needed in order to make it practicable.

When we explore further in this direction we find that perceptions of how useful the OAS is vary considerably and are a direct function of the interests of whoever is performing the analysis. Thus, for some, the Organization's credibility depends on our capacity to respond to threats to democracy, while, for others, its credibility depends on what it can do in cooperation for development. For some, the yardstick is the Organization's performance in the defense and promotion of human rights; for others, its efficiency in combating drug trafficking, or its ability to improve citizen security. The fact is, in order to be seen in a positive light, the OAS will have to respond to some—mutually agreed upon—extent to all those demands, and, for that too, consensus is needed.

For that reason, it is essential that we engage in a political dialogue that may lead to conclusions that can definitively determine which mandates the Organization must pursue as priorities, just as we agreed to do during the last approved change to the procedures and schedule for discussing the “Strategic Vision.” If we succeed in that, then it will be possible to implement a strategic allocation of our human and financial resources in line with the consensus achieved.

² Although the Art Museum of the Americas was created by the OAS, it is also part of this group of institutions, and I reiterate the proposal that I made last year to set a deadline for it to become self-financing.

The purpose of this exercise, therefore, will be to try and reach areas of consensus regarding the best way, now, to achieve the goals of the Organization in the 21st century. To my mind, it should include:

- a) Ratifying the strategic decision to concentrate the work of the areas on the four pillars defined above.
- b) Setting a timetable for agreeing, with each of the institutions that depend on other agencies, the elimination of their financing from the Regular Fund. The role that the member states would like the so-called “decentralized bodies” to play should be determined as soon as possible. We are referring here to the Inter-American Defense Board, the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission, the Inter-American Committee on Ports, the Pan American Development Foundation, Trust for the Americas, the Inter-American Children’s institute, and the Art Museum of the Americas. The fact that almost all of these bodies originated in different legal instruments and are governed by ministerial meetings outside the structure of the Organization should be taken into account in the analysis.

Such an agreement could include other forms of material assistance that the OAS could continue to provide them, to the extent that their main funding would come from other sources

- c) Concluding the current mandate prioritization exercise and beginning another stage in which each would be screened according to three key questions: (i) Does it correspond to any of the pillars of the OAS’s work? (ii) Is the work that the OAS does in each area useful and relevant for the member states and/or for the OAS to function properly? (iii) Do other institutions of the inter-American system perform work in similar areas and, if so, on what level?

The dialogue on these issues should include very precise questions by which to set clear priorities, such as:

- a) Does the work of the OAS in a specific field really make a difference?
- b) Can the OAS do the job on its own or are strategic partnerships needed?
- c) Are the tasks performed by the OAS consistent with the national interests of the majority of its member states? In other words, are they on the hemispheric agenda?

In the first document, I proposed a path to follow in this regard when I suggested that we should concentrate on our defense of democracy and promotion of good governance; strengthen our inter-American human rights system, for which there is no credible substitute; keep in mind the issues of institutional and human development in relation to the mandates that we have been

assigned by the Summits of the Americas; and give priority to public security as the core theme of our multidimensional activities in the area of security.

Democracy

Much work has been done in this area in recent years. At its last three sessions, the General Assembly adopted resolutions on the subject of monitoring implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the member states engaged in a dialogue to assess implementation of that Charter in the 10 years since it was adopted. As a result of that dialogue, specific topics were identified in which member states have not yet reached agreement on how to act collectively. There is, therefore, a basis for further work in this field.

There is, moreover, a chance in the short term of focusing on efforts to move toward a definition of what constitutes an “alteration of the democratic order,” other than traditional coups d’état. Discussion of this specific issue, without reference to any particular case, would, if consensus is reached, substantially enhance the capacity of the OAS to react in this very important field.

Human rights

As regards human rights, we are in the final throes of a fruitful dialogue on strengthening the inter-American system. Very specific measures have been discussed in an inclusive and open process that has resulted in significant progress. The member states have identified, with ample participation by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and civil society, a series of concrete matters in which improvements can be made either to procedures or rules so as to enhance attention to victims of violations, and specific recommendations have been made with respect to each of those matters. All that remains to be done in this area, then, is to continue improving by adopting the appropriate decisions.

Development

More precise and efficient work can be done with respect to development. Efforts are scattered over a wide range of projects with relatively little funding.

It is also apparent that we have not managed to focus sufficiently on what we do best, that is to say on institutional and human development projects.

To be successful in this area, a major effort needs to be made to ensure that regional or hemispheric objectives are negotiated and aligned with national interests. The objectives of eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, and overcoming marginalization in order to achieve integral development are regarded as core goals by most of our member states. Other central objectives have to do with scholarships, trade and competitiveness.

Development is probably the area where most dialogue is needed with other agencies of the system, in order to identify the real hemispheric priorities and decide on what roles each agency could fulfill, thereby avoiding overlaps

Security

Citizen security is clearly an area in which the demands placed on our Organization are both increasing and insistent. The counterdrugs mandate received from the Heads of State of the Americas at the Summit of Cartagena confirms the priority of this issue. When taken in conjunction with the recent decision to transfer to the OAS leadership of the mandates on organized crime assigned by the same summit, that responsibility confirms that public security is now a central objective and will require the allocation of renewed efforts and resources to it on the part of the OAS.

IV. CONCLUSION:

We have, then, reached a watershed as far as the future of the Organization is concerned. As it has on several previous occasions, only to be postponed, the time has come for the OAS to adapt to the demands of the present. That much is evident to us all. That is why at the end of 2011, in keeping with my responsibilities as Secretary General of the institution, I presented a document entitled “A Strategic Vision of the OAS,” in the hopes of stimulating a process of dialogue and change. That did not happen and the situation has grown, if anything, more complex.

Therefore, I see it as my duty to persevere with my aims and submit for the consideration of the member states a second document containing many of the publicly and privately expressed views that I have gathered over the past year about the state of the OAS. Once again, I hope to trigger a process of political dialogue that will enable us successfully to tackle the challenges that the OAS faces for the 21st century. I pledge my efforts to that goal.

However, for that to happen, it is essential that the member states agree that the time for difficult decisions has come and that they bend themselves to the task. As I have said before, I realize that it is no easy undertaking but it is unavoidable, so let us jointly embark on this journey into the future.