

**Peace in Central America:  
The Challenges of Security,  
Democracy, and  
Development**

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## Peace in Central America: The Challenges of Security, Democracy, and Development

Toledo – 24- 26 April 2007

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## FOREWORD

This paper reflects the proceedings of the first in a series of three meetings that shall culminate in August 2007, held to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the “Procedure to Establish a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America”, better known as the Esquipulas II Accords.

In the Accords, the governments of Central America took the commitment to adopt certain measures aimed at putting an end to the armed conflicts that engulfed the region in the 1980’s. The CITpax initiative seeks to take advantage of the ongoing preparations for the twentieth anniversary by undertaking an appraisal of the peace process. The purpose is to give new momentum for actions which could help to tackle effectively the current challenges from a regional perspective, reinvigorating the process of peace consolidation and democratic stabilization initiated in 1987. Both the United Nations Development Programme and the Albert Schweitzer Institute are also participating in this exercise.

The meeting in Toledo consisted of several working sessions held over two days. In the first day, members of civil society organisations, with the support of regional experts, organised themselves into three working groups to examine the situation with regard to security, democracy, and development. The groups identified the progress made and outstanding challenges, formulating proposals for action aimed at overcoming the existing problems. On the second day, the groups presented their conclusions and proposals to high government representatives of Central American countries that joined the meeting. The following representatives participated in the debate: Eduardo Stein, Vice-President of Guatemala; Bruno Stagno, Costa Rican Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship; Augusto Zamora Rodríguez, Nicaraguan Ambassador to Spain; and Oscar Santamaría, special envoy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador. Among those who participated in the meetings and in the opening of the conference were Enrique Iglesias, Secretary-General of the Ibero-American General Secretariat, and Trinidad Jiménez, Secretary of State for Ibero-America of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation.

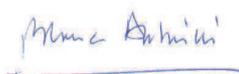
This present document seeks to summarize the main issues discussed during the debate and the conclusions reached by the working groups. In accordance with common practices in meetings held behind closed doors, the statements included in this document are not attributed specifically to individual participants.

We wish to express our gratitude to all the participants, sponsors and collaborators whose interest, professionalism and support contributed to the success of the event. Furthermore, we would like to extend our appreciation to the CITpax team that worked on this project, and especially to Patricia Pérez-Gómez, Juan Garrigues and Paula Navarro, as well as to our partners of the Fundación Arias para la Paz.

Similarly, we would like to take the opportunity to extend our heartfelt thanks to the regional government of Castilla-La Mancha, without whose generous collaboration this initiative could not have been carried out successfully, for its constant support and hospitality.



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## I. Introduction

The meeting “Peace in Central America: the Challenges of Security, Democracy, and Development” was held in Toledo from 24-26 April 2007, with the purpose of contributing to the debate among members of civil society organisations, experts, and representatives of governments of the region, twenty years after the signing of the Esquipulas II Accords. The Toledo International Centre for Peace (CITpax) organised the meeting in association with the General Secretariat for Ibero-America, the Fundación Arias para la Paz y el Desarrollo Humano, and the Project of Justice in Times of Transition.

The participants had the following documents at their disposal, as tools for debate:

- “Esquipulas 20 años después: La larga marcha por los derechos humanos en Centroamérica”, report by Victor Valle.

- “Reexaminando los Acuerdos de Esquipulas II: La Seguridad Regional”, working paper by Daniel Matul and Natalia Quirós.

- “Democratización y Fortalecimiento de la Democracia: ¿Cuánto puede cambiar en 20 años y qué se le puede exigir a la democracia en Centroamérica?”, paper by Jairo Acuña-Alfaro.

- “Una mirada al desempeño económico de Centroamérica 20 años después de los Acuerdos de Esquipulas”, paper by J. Alvaro Cáliz R.

- “20 años de Esquipulas: Conflictividad y desafíos actuales en Centroamérica”, CITpax publication by Emma Fernández Rupérez.

We shall now set out a summary of the issues that were presented and discussed during the plenary sessions.

## **II. General Assessment of the Process**

The twenty years that have elapsed since the signing of the Esquipulas II Accords of August 1987 were described as “the long march for human rights in Central America”. Taken as a whole, they aimed at guaranteeing peace, security, and democracy in the region.

It was noted that the regional president’s intention when accepting to abide by the Esquipulas commitments was not solely to put an end to war, but also to attain peace, freedom, democracy, and development. The El Salvador and Guatemala Accords followed this same course, propounding to go beyond the mere determination of mechanisms to put an end to armed conflict, to focus on its root causes. In all cases, and despite the unquestionable progress made in leaving behind armed confrontation in the twenty years that have elapsed since Esquipulas, there are numerous outstanding challenges pertaining to security, democracy, and development that call for action.

Following the initiatives of the Contadora Group, the Support Group, and the latter Esquipulas I meeting, the Esquipulas II Accords found their place in Latin American history as a manner of finding solutions within the region itself, rather than doing it under pressure from the superpowers of the time. It was further noted that the conflicts in Central American countries, although “fuelled” by the Cold War, were rooted in long-standing internal factors.

With regard to the historical context that led to the Accords, it was stated that as several civilian presidents with various degrees of legitimacy came to power in Central America, the generalized conviction that peace had to be conceived as a goal common to the region as a whole started to take root. In parallel to this, there was a growing belief that elections should be open to all political sectors without exclusion. Furthermore, as Central Americans were confronted with the increasing costs of war, the preference for political negotiation over armed confrontation as a means to put an end to the armed conflicts gained support, and it became clear that peace talks were a prerequisite to tackle the fundamental problems of under-development in an effective manner. Spurred on by the experience of autonomy demonstrated through the Contadora peace effort, the Central American presidents gained sufficient courage to find their own path to peace, and thus took an independent position to that advocated by the Government of the United States then in power.

The Sapoa Agreement was a direct consequence of Esquipulas II. This accord provided for the disarmament of the Nicaraguan Resistance (the “Contra”) – a vast anti-Sandinista irregular force supported by the United States, which had their base in Honduras. Several years later (in 1992 and 1996 respectively), the El Salvador and Guatemala Accords were signed, after negotiations conducted with the support of the United Nations between the respective governments and insurgent forces in each country.

As to the achievements of the last two decades, several facts were mentioned. Political repression had ceased, elections were free, better organized, more legitimate and credible, and parliaments had become more representative and plural. Significant progress had been made in the subordination of military forces to legally constituted civilian power. The media had become more open to democratic debate. Various regional integration mechanisms had been set and for a political dialogue among governments were held regularly, as exemplified by the presidential summits, which in turn led to initiatives such as the Framework Agreement on Democratic Security (FADS).

During the debate following the presentation, it was highlighted that the International Commission for Central American Recovery and Development (the Sanford Commission) had played a significant role as a harbinger of support from an important part of the international community for efforts to seek Central American solutions to the region’s conflicts. This approach was based on the understanding that **peace, development, and democracy are all variables of the same equation.**

It was also said that social problems and inequalities were at the root of the wars. These shortcomings persisted throughout the countries of the isthmus, although the East-West antagonism was now something of the past. The political wars of the past have given way to social confrontation, which found one of its most visible manifestations in the city street violence of the “maras”, or juvenile gangs, as well as in the influence of organized crime, and even in violence within the family.

Indeed, it was mentioned that the feeling of citizens’ insecurity, which is so widespread in Central America as in the rest of Latin America, together with the persistence of inequalities, have led to a questioning of the social pact. This, in turn, weakens trust in democracy, since in the opinion of many its advent has failed to produce the benefits that were expected of it. The region was characterised by “low intensity” democracies. Wide sectors of the population held the view that

democracy had not produced concrete benefits to the citizenry. A remark was made to the effect that, if in the 1980's the absence of a social pact had been the cause of armed conflict, twenty years on there was an underlying danger that conflict might re-emerge - albeit with characteristics that would differ from those prevailing during the war - unless this issue was adequately tackled.

Another opinion voiced was that despite the signing of the peace agreements, Central America was far from living fully at peace. In this context, the importance of "refreshing memories" to deal with the traumatic events experienced in the past was underlined as an indispensable requirement to achieve the **long-awaited reconciliation**. The need to formulate and put into effect preventative policies to avoid latent conflicts was also mentioned as a more effective way of dealing with crime than the persistent recourse to "hard-handed" policies in the region's northern triangle. It was noted that in addition to crime, prevention should be directed at diminishing the risks stemming from territorial tensions or from disputes over natural resources, as well as from widening ideological cleavages.

Concerning the security agenda, it was stated that the current international context, and particularly the declaration of "war on terrorism", has led to a situation where attempts to **impose priorities that are foreign to the region, primarily regarding security matters**, have become all too common.

### **III. Security Challenges**

The issue of security was introduced by means of slides that illustrated the transformation of a former Guatemalan military base into an inter-cultural centre. This was presented as an indication of the changes that have taken place in the region since the era of armed conflict. The concept of human security had developed in the post-war period, gradually replacing the notion of national security, quintessential to the Cold War. Having said this, these positive changes are now, once again, being called into question by old ideological mind-sets. These have revived a certain degree of re-militarization, and the idea that the best way to combat the so-called new trans-national threats is to enforce repressive measures to the exclusion of other policies.

Among the achievements made since the signing of the Esquipulas II Accords, reference was made to the subordination of the State apparatus to civilian power,

the dismantling of units involved in human rights violations, the creation of mechanisms for conflict prevention and conciliation. Furthermore, armies were cut down in size and military spending accordingly in those countries that had suffered the effects of armed conflict. Significant changes were made in the missions, doctrine, and training of armed forces and police units. By putting an end to the authoritarian safeguards of military forces, a political and democratic opening widened political space. This led to a debate on security in both political parties and civil society.

On the regional sphere, the signing of the **Framework Treaty on Democratic Security (FTDS)** was highlighted. This treaty helped to find outlets for the differences that existed between or among states and was particularly useful in fostering trust among them. The Central American Parliament rejuvenated border areas, transforming “armoured borders” into nuclei for development and opening up possibilities for civil society participation.

Although institutional coordination in the regional sphere had improved, **the institutions established had “a lot of visibility and very little to do”**. Despite the numerous proposals aimed at making the preventative nature of these institutions more effective, using units such as neighbourhood police and community police, no adequate instruments for participation have yet appeared.

It was also said that in the past few years, and with the aim of tackling new threats, certain actions have been taken hastily such as, for example, the creation of a rapid reaction force for joint action, without an in-depth analysis of its impact on civil democratic institutionality. Indeed, the Conference of Central American Armed Forces has reduced the visibility of civil institutions, including the presidential summits. In fact, the Conference of Central American Armed Forces enjoys greater recognition than the civil institutions that are parties to the Central American Integration System.

Congruent with the concept of the balance of power, in the past the threats to the security of Central American states were assessed in terms of the comparative strength of their neighbours. In present times, instead, **threats are perceived as a consequence of the institutional weaknesses of the States themselves**. The rise in violence, the illicit flow of weapons, and other expressions of international organized crime has contributed to question of the State’s monopoly of in the field of security.

In other terms, it was stated that over the last two decades, the region’s pendulum in the field of security has swung from military to civilian, and is now swinging back towards the military. A loss of the civilian control, together with a parallel **resurgence of the military** in the region have been detected by political *élites*.

The inability to curb the expansion of the “maras” has been one of the factors playing into this trend.

Although some very specific and isolated problems have been solved through the implementation of security measures, the relationship between the police and justice is tenuous at best. As it was stressed, **justice is crucial** in order to enjoy an effective security policy. Another issue considered to be of great concern was corruption within the security apparatus. This was exemplified in the incidents that occurred a few months prior to the meeting, and which seem to point towards a **connection between organized crime and politics** or other elements deeply embedded into the State apparatus.

According to indicators provided by the Central American Observatory on Violence, **citizen insecurity** stands out as one of the main concerns of the population. Despite this, a significant reduction in the number of police personnel has been registered. The percentage of GDP spent on military matters has also diminished. Spending on security, as was observed, does not correspond to the costs of violence. It was also noted that no specific models have been developed to manage the situation autonomously, and that the region lacks installed capacity.

Various comments were made regarding the characterization of **maras** or juvenile gangs. The phenomenon was described as a form of hierarchical organization based on principles of solidarity within the group and comprising youths from marginalized sectors in society, in general deprived of any prospects of gainful employment. This occurrence is especially acute in countries which are unable to absorb their own population productively and to offer perspectives for future training or personal growth. The emergence and propagation of the maras has been used in many cases as a **pretext to demonize the youth**. Policies that seek to conduct the fight against gangs through purely repressive methods respond to this perception. A different approach was proposed instead: tackling the phenomenon as a whole through the promotion of education, labour opportunities, communal participation. In this context, citizen security policies, based exclusively on the use of public force, were coined as “elitist”. A new diagnostic of security matters was therefore called for.

Finally, the need to strengthen civil society participation in the debate on security and defence policies was underlined. This would facilitate the task of democratic control and provide guarantees that respect for, and promotion of,

human rights would become a basic feature of such policies. Taking into account the various published statistics regarding victimization, and related issues, the importance of establishing a solid and trustworthy database for the entire region, was proposed as a starting point to channel the debate on public policies.

#### **IV. Strengthening Democracy**

The presentation of the subject started by highlighting that Central America presents a sharp contrast between the homogeneity that stems from a common historic and colonial legacy, and the **diversity of individual national political regimes**. Notwithstanding this fact, the signatories to the Esquipulas Accords have experienced democratization processes whose characteristics, are largely similar.

Between 1972 and 1979, Central America went through a wave of democratization with the aim of joining what can be termed the “democratic club” in the international arena. This process, usually driven by advances in the development area, has evolved in reverse. The democratization process was set in motion by the political will to achieve peace fed which and buttressed by hopes that it would help a very fragile process of human and economic development.

Consequently, the question raised was: “what can we ask of democracy after these twenty years?” The answer to this question probably lies on a set of realities that affect each and every one of the countries in the region to varying degrees: **the frailty of political parties, low voter turnouts**, and the schism between the population’s perception of its democratic system and the scholarly rhetoric, and above all, the persistence of **poverty and inequalities**.

The democratization process has been built on the rather fragile foundation of periodic elections. It was observed that polls have been carried out since the seventies, that they have since evolved positively, and that their quality has improved after the peace agreements. The level of political competition has been enhanced by the participation of minority political parties, which allows for a better distribution of power. Nevertheless, it was noted that the **political polarization of the supreme electoral bodies** constitutes one of the most serious obstacles to the holding of fully free and transparent elections.

It was stressed that democracy does not limit itself to the holding of free elections. Two fundamental elements of a democratic system, it was observed, are the consultation of citizens in the decision-making process, and **accountability** for actions taken. These traits were described as the two outstanding issues throughout most of the region which widen even further the existing gap between the population and those in government. In this context, it was also noted that those citizens who participate more actively in public matters will also be more demanding towards public officials and assess their commitment to manage public resources in accordance to the law, the principles of efficiency and transparency.

It was later reiterated that democracy does not only require free and competitive elections but it also requires a **State governed by the Rule of Law and that can be operational**.

Finally, in order to obtain the necessary support to survive and strengthen itself, **democracy must be capable of offering the dividends of development to its citizens**: it must serve as a means to reach greater human and economic development. These conditions are equally essential to ensure the perpetuation of democratic principles of governance. It was further noted that there is yet much to be done in this sense, given that poverty and inequalities persist endemically in most of the region.

During the debate, mention was made to the fact that democratic principles and respect for human rights should apply all spheres of life, starting with **family structures**. Although important advances have been achieved at the institutional level, there is still much to do in the cultural dimension. Authoritarian practices that persist in society have been mirrored in family life.

The need to strengthen the **gender** focus in electoral participation was subsequently emphasized, as was the enjoyment of acquired social and economic rights. In this context, participants warned against the danger of falling into the “percentage trap”, adding that the policy of “electing women for them to lose” was not an unusual practice.

It was generally agreed that democracies in the region have been mostly based on the formality of complying with the electoral ritual rather than on the **verification and follow-up of governmental commitments**. This flawed perception has been taken up and fuelled by **international co-operation policies and programmes**. It was remarked that politics must be envisaged as the art of making possible what is necessary for the population.

Concern was also expressed regarding a **political crisis** in the majority of the region's countries, as manifested by the **exhaustion of political parties**. Within this context, a rhetorical question was raised regarding the incentives required to heighten political participation as the best manner to redress these crises. On the other hand, and in reaction to the credibility crisis experienced by political parties, an **upsurge and expansion of organized civil society** has been observed.

## **V. Development: An Appraisal of Socioeconomic Performance**

In the presentation, it was highlighted that the year 1987 represented a turning point in Central American modern history. At that time, the domestic and external junctures called for decisive and consistent action to achieve peace and democracy. The demise of the import substitution model and the side effects of the armed conflicts had caused widespread social and economic decline. As inequalities and poverty became more acute, the gates opened for unbalanced migration and altered the region's geography.

Peace brought about a positive change. Although it would be far-fetched to talk about an economic miracle, it can be stated that **political stability allowed for some level of economic stability**, which heralded modest progress in the field of economic and human development, although improvement in this area was hindered by the lack of a social pact. The economic expansion stemming from peace reached its peak towards the end of the 1990's, followed by a relative decline.

Esquipulas made it clear that the region's development would lack a viable future unless it was carried out through a renewed integration process. Given the dynamics of globalization and economic liberalization, the possibilities for each country to enter the world markets successfully were very limited. Thereby, both in the Esquipulas II Accords, as in subsequent declarations, the presidents of Central American states recognized the **need for joint action, as well as the reduction of intra-regional asymmetries**.

Statements were made to the effect that the year 2007 could become a new turning point for reverting the relative slowdown of social development figures, a trend that is affecting Costa Rica and Panama as well, the two countries that display the highest levels of social development. It is also an occasion for reverting the ongoing erosion

of democracy. It was reiterated that despite the region's moderate economic recovery, there is still much to be done in terms of social development.

This does not depend exclusively upon economic growth, requiring, as it does, a **solid and coherent fiscal policy**, that will allow for an equitable distribution of the benefits of growth, as well as the optimization of social spending.

As for economic development, the **regional economy has been marked by volatility and a low growth rate**. After an analysis of the main obstacles to development, the main, immediate challenges were identified as those of tackling poverty, inequality; job insecurity; the lack of a competitive economic system; and the impact of natural disasters. In this context, it was noted that the region's vulnerability to natural disasters, such as Hurricane Mitch, together with an unfriendly economic policy vis-à-vis the environment has led to soil degradation, deforestation, and the exhaustion of water resources.

On the other hand, and although the region no longer displays the upheavals of armed conflict, **social violence and corruption** represent a new menace to the momentum that is required to continue along the path of socio-economic growth.

It was also pointed out that the growth registered in the 1990's due to the liberalization of trade markets after the cessation of armed conflicts produced some winners, but also many losers. The reason for this is that development schemes applied so far have not yet reached the most vulnerable segments of the population. Despite a reduction in the percentage of persons living beneath the poverty line, in absolute terms there has been **an increase in the number of poor people**, which remains unacceptably high.

Furthermore, inequalities have increased, making development unsustainable. This is particularly true in the case of **vulnerable groups**: indigenous or populations of African descent, women and children. There are significant lags in health, education, and jobs, with a significant impact on women. Although demands have been vindicated to some extent, through the recognition of their rights, especially those of political participation, the level of income is highly differentiated, being that of women significantly below that of men. Redressing such trends was recognized as a priority.

Another aspect presented as a priority was the need to amend regional policies to generate economic development that are not beneficial to the environment, which renders them unsustainable.

Making the region's social stability dependant upon remittances from abroad was also considered unsustainable in the medium to long term. In some cases, such remittances represent up to 23% of GDP. This implies a powerful disincentive to national production, distorts social and family fabrics, and establishes consumption habits that do not respond to priority needs. Another problem with equally negative effects is the increasing absorption of unqualified labour force by the **maquilas**, set up in the region by international corporations as a way to cut production costs.

It was considered necessary to provide the regional integration process with mechanisms that would narrow intra-regional asymmetries. Similarly, the implementation of a **fiscal pact**, whereby each country would give the State the capacity to redistribute collected funds on the basis of an integrated strategy to promote the creation of job opportunities and thus would be guided by a goal that goes beyond the concern to provide social assistance to those in need.

When dealing with human development, it was observed that the number of inhabitants in the region has increased massively. Central America had 28 million inhabitants in the early 1980's, and is now reaching 40 million. The region is growing - people are moving to the cities at an incredible rate. In the majority of countries, there is a very strong **dependence on the youth**, albeit the possibilities of incorporating them into the productive system are very limited. Because of this, a significant challenge exists regarding the structure of employment opportunities. In Costa Rica and Panama, demographic ageing has begun to raise concerns regarding social protection systems and generational replacement.

Se afirmó que es necesario dotar al proceso de integración regional de mecanismos capaces de alentar la reducción de las asimetrías intra-regionales. Asimismo se consideró prioritaria la puesta en marcha de **un pacto fiscal** que en cada país dote al Estado de la capacidad de reasignar los fondos recaudados en función de una estrategia integral de multiplicación de oportunidades que no se guíe por una mera preocupación asistencial.

In 1980, none of the countries in the isthmus had a HDI<sup>1</sup> above the world average. At present, both Costa Rica and Panama are at a level that was considered acceptable. Moreover, it was remarked that although a general upward trend has been registered in the region, it should be recalled that the starting point was extremely low. The growth trend has slowed down since 1999, underscoring the need to recover the rhythm of growth of the previous decade.

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<sup>1</sup> The Human Development Index is an indicator that covers three dimensions of human wellbeing: income, education, and health.

A conclusion was reached whereby, despite economic growth and the subsequent increases in employment and production, the **persistent shortcomings of human growth** in the region have not been addressed. Such growth has been achieved to the detriment of the quality of employment, a problem aggravated by the use of cheap labour as bait for foreign investments. This situation has been aggravated by the rise in the numbers of the poor.

The characteristics of the development systems of Central American states must be the object of critical revision to refocus them towards a project of regional integration based on an economic network that can be viable in the long run. In this sense, the **advisability of attracting foreign investments of greater added value** was stressed. Furthermore, the need for trade negotiations to be carried out within the framework of an intelligent integration of the area's economy into the international markets, to obtain balanced benefits, and to help reduce the levels of poverty, was also raised.

During the debate, it emerged that **violence bears a significant economic cost**. The examples of Guatemala, and El Salvador were quoted, where this cost is estimated to represent 7.3 and 11.5 percent of their respective GDPs.

After debating the issues in the plenary sessions, the participants divided themselves into three working groups to identify achievements and challenges, and to formulate proposals for further action under three main topic headings: security, democracy, and development.

## VI. Second Day Comments

The session of the second day began with the presentations made by the Secretary-General of the Ibero-American General Secretariat, **Enrique Iglesias**, and the Secretary of State for Ibero-America, **Trinidad Jiménez**, followed by comments by the Guatemalan Vice-President, **Eduardo Stein**, the Costa Rican Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship, **Bruno Stagno**, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador, **Oscar Santamaría**, and the Nicaraguan Ambassador to Spain, **Augusto Zamora Rodríguez**.

In the welcoming remarks, it was recalled that twenty years since Esquipulas II, Central America must remain faithful both to the spirit of integration, and to its peaceful vocation. In terms of democracy, obvious achievements have been made through the consolidation of electoral processes. Civil society has also acquired an unprecedented dimension. As for the outstanding challenges, reforms were suggested, for both political parties, and the state, including the establishment of a high quality civil service. “More market is needed, but also more State”, as was mentioned, although it is also necessary to modernize public structures. Regarding security, it was pointed out that this represents one of the greatest challenges for the region. Reference was also made to the phenomenon of the *maras*, related to the situation of abandonment and uprooting among large sectors of youth. As for development, attention was focused on the fact that the countries have learnt to manage their macroeconomics. A word of warning was also voiced regarding free trade agreements, which despite being positive instruments also entail significant costs, and must be managed properly. It was emphasised that in Central America, fiscal reform is inevitable, as the tax burden is excessively low. On the social front, various serious problems exist regarding poverty and exclusion that require an increase in social spending. In other words, democracy must be strengthened to make it more active and effective.

Reference was also made to the support provided by Spain since the initiation of political dialogue to resolve the past armed conflicts in the region, going back to the Contadora initiative and the Support Group, and continuing with the Esquipulas process. It was further noted that Spain works side by side with Central American governments in the fight to eradicate poverty. Emphasis was placed on the importance of regional integration and the progress made in the ongoing negotiations for Association Agreements with the European Union.

In reply to these welcoming words, it was observed that there are two fundamental aspects to Esquipulas. On the one hand, the fact that it was based on a regional approach; and on the other, the fact that it envisaged peace in a manner that went beyond the purely military aspects of conflicts (ceasefires, demobilizations), to open up a broad political agenda. Although the agreement did not bring about economic benefits, it allowed for the creation of a dynamic in which social agendas gained recognition as issues to be addressed. Nonetheless, twenty years down the line, political parties have not matured to the extent that was expected, and have been incapable of taking on board the responsibilities that the present challenges require of them.

It was further observed, that beyond regional integration, deep social cohesion must be promoted within each country, in conformity with the millennium goals, filling the gap between the rural and the urban. There is a common heritage of Central American integration that is irreversible, although it may be convenient to promote a system having a “variable geometry”. The integration process, both at the regional and at the international levels, must be conscientious and careful, and must be guided by what is most convenient for each particular country, without seeking to impose schemes from other parts of the world. As regards Central America’s role vis-à-vis the rest of Latin America, it could collaborate to help the Group of Rio become a truly consensual mechanism. At the origins of the Rio mechanism was the Contadora Group, whose historical role was hailed as very positive for Central America.

The importance of political will was highlighted in making the Esquipulas II process viable, as well as the peace processes in El Salvador and in Guatemala, both of which counted with active United Nations support. Referring to the Central American Integration System as a by-product of the regional vision that emerged from the Accords, it was stated that it had created the necessary conditions and instruments to allow the process to evolve. The importance of obtaining the support of the Inter-American Development Bank and that of other international organizations was also stressed.

Among the comments made, the opinion was voiced that the value of Esquipulas II in the Central American peace process had been relative. From this perspective, although it did not initially have the support of all the international powers, Esquipulas managed to fill a dangerous political vacuum. The crucial factor to initiate the road to peace in Central America had been the political will in favour of negotiation, as displayed by all the region’s governments without exception. This perspective also highlighted the role played by Contadora and the Support Group at previous stages. According to this opinion, such initiatives had helped to prevent an all-out military invasion of the isthmus by foreign powers. Moreover, these had been the first purely Latin American initiatives since 1853. The integrationist will of Central America was also underlined, and indeed, its openness towards all forms of co-operation within and beyond the region, an attitude which was considered to be justified by the necessity to find a space for itself within the realities of the globalized world.

## **VII. Conclusions and Proposals**

We shall now move on to present a summary of the conclusions that the working groups established the previous day put forward verbally to the government representatives that joined the debate on Thursday, 26 April.

### **Group 1: Social and Economic Development**

Achievements:

- Macroeconomic stability, trade liberalization, and the reactivation of regional integration.
- Reduction of poverty by 10 percentage points, although the number of poor people has increased in absolute terms.
- Slow, but persistent, progress regarding economic development indicators; military investments gave way to investment on social issues.
- Recognition of the collective rights of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, and women; in terms of land, greater progress was achieved in Nicaragua; in terms of rights, Guatemala made the greater advances.

Challenges:

- Growth exclusively supported the export sector.
- Informal employment increased
- Inequalities have persisted, or even increased
- Waves of economic migration, with the consequent de-structuring of families and “youth drain”, the latter being the main resource for the region’s future.
- Dependence on remittances from abroad, with the consequent distortion in consumption habits and disincentives towards national production activities.
- Need to improve the environmental situation.

Proposals:

- Implementation of a fiscal pact that will review the tax burden and efficiency in the allocation of public spending.
- To work in the productive linkages between dynamic and non-dynamic sectors to increase added value and productivity in sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and the “maquilas”.
- To give priority to investments in health and education, increasing the rate of secondary education and technical-training coverage, as well as non-formal education.
- To create quality education for children and youth, especially in rural areas.
- To create the necessary conditions to benefit from the “demographic bonus”.
- To improve differentiated spending in favour of indigenous peoples, women, Afro-descendants, and the youth.
- To reduce the costs of intermediation in remittances from abroad; to stimulate their productive use; to allow their use as loan warranties.
- To apply participatory budgets at local government level.
- To stabilize and professionalize the civil service.
- To reduce the asymmetries between countries, and to promote more demanding international co-operation.
- To improve environmental protection and involve international co-operation in the promotion of sustainable human development.

## Group 2: Democratization

According to the general group appraisal, the access to power has become more plural, but not its exercise.

Achievements:

- Institutionalization of free and competitive elections.
- Creation of new political parties and transformation of guerrilla movements into political parties.
- Subordination of military power to civilian rule.
- Improved performance of the checks and balances system through State control instruments such as human rights ombudsmen and comptroller offices.
- Broad protection of civil rights supported by legislation.
- Pluralism reflected in the opening-up of the media.
- Greater transparency in electoral processes and in the degree of competition; bipartisanship has been opened towards a system which includes a greater representation of political forces.

Challenges:

- Poor overall performance by political parties.
- Excessive partisanship in electoral authorities.
- Limitations in the representative and plural nature of local government.
- Weaknesses in the institutional capacity for the exercise of citizen rights and transparency in the exercise of power.
- Need to strengthen democracy within political party structures.
- Need for a technical and independent evaluation to depoliticize electoral bodies and improve political party representation.
- Need to strengthen the control measures for political party funding, and to promote an active citizenry.
- Lack of respect for cultural and ethnic freedoms; frailness of the citizenry in assuming an active role in democracy; obstacles to citizen participation, and to access reliable, comprehensible, and timely information.

Proposals:

- To strengthen and update political parties, improving internal democratic processes, and increasing the degree of transparency as regards the citizenry.
- To promote electoral legislation that fosters balanced competition, limits the level of campaign spending, and improves the technical and procedural aspects that limit the exercise of the vote and political representation.
- To strengthen the institutional apparatus that guarantees the exercise of citizen rights.
- To promote education for the exercise of citizen rights.
- To promote legislation that regulates the access to information.

### **Group 3: Security Challenges in Central America**

Achievements:

- A new concept of security that recognizes the human being as the focus; human security, and democratic security.
- Progress in the subordination of the military to civilian power, reduction of military personnel and spending.
- Division between public security and defence agencies.
- Creation of mechanisms for conflict resolution and prevention.
- Greater civil society participation in security and defence matters.
- Central American regional institutionalization. Signing of the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security, and its revision.

## Challenges:

- Need for a wide-reaching regional approach in which security, democracy, and development are linked.
- Need to improve the quality of life of Central American citizens and the exercise of their rights, which should not be affected by the persecution of crime.
- Development of partial policies limited to repression.
- Need to examine the re-emergence of armed forces in matters of internal security.
- Definition of a truly national security agenda, not imposed by abroad, to face the particular phenomena that affect it.
- Unsatisfactory implementation of regional institutionality and of the Framework Treaty for Democratic Security.
- Privatization of security functions with repercussions on public policies.
- Need to define the functions of security forces.
- Weakness of judicial systems.
- Creation or strengthening of investigative police forces.
- Challenges that organized crime represents and its penetration into the structures of political power and its impact on society.
- Insufficient information systems.

Proposals:

- Security, as a concept, must incorporate the family dimension.
- The Framework Treaty for Democratic Security must be socialized.
- Public policies must be drafted, founded upon statistical data and concrete arguments; gradually promote greater citizen participation.
- Generate diagnoses on security threats in the region, building upon what has been done previously.
- Creation of a civil society consultative committee on security matters.
- Public security must be incorporated by academic bodies as a nucleus of learning.
- Incorporate into academic courses the teaching of systems for the prevention of violence and for peaceful conflict resolution.
- Create a less repressive, and more preventive, police.
- Establish greater co-ordination among governmental bodies in security matters.
- Re-examine the role of private security companies and promote the strengthening of police forces.
- Tackle the issue of excluded populations and the social problems that reflect the consequences of violence.
- Society must at least discuss the need for armed forces.

## **ANNEXES**



## Final Agenda: Programme, Context, and Methodology

### **“Peace in Central America: the Challenges of Security, Democracy, and Development”**

*Hotel Doménico  
Toledo, 24 - 26 April, 2007*

On 7 of August 2007, Central American states will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Procedure to Establish a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America, a series of commitments known as the Esquipulas II Accords, destined to put an end to armed conflicts in the region. The Accords included provisions in the fields of security, democratization, and national reconciliation. Twenty years after their signing, the achievements in the region are obvious. With the end of internal armed conflicts, all the countries in the area have governments that emerged from free elections, and important steps have been taken in the realm of democratization and the protection of human rights, improvements have also been registered in terms of their economic growth. Furthermore, significant progress has been made in their integration process.

Despite all of these achievements, serious obstacles remain for the consolidation, on stable foundations, of democratic stability and peace in the isthmus. These are reflected in the high incidence of violence and crime; the weakness and insufficiency of democratic institutions; the high percentages of social marginalization; and the acute levels of poverty and inequality, which bear a particularly harmful impact upon the most vulnerable groups of society. Therefore, it is worth taking advantage of the opportunity that the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Esquipulas Accords presents to embark upon a process of deliberation to assess the current challenges that the region is facing and to give, at this stage, a new momentum on the path to consolidate peace and democratic stability.

The meeting “Peace in Central America: the Challenges of Security, Democracy, and Development”, seeks to contribute to the aforementioned deliberation through a debate with the participation of representatives of Central American states, members of civil society and scholars. This is the first, in a series of three meetings, which shall culminate in the region with the commemoration of the anniversary. These meetings are part of a project entitled, “A Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America: the Outstanding Agenda Twenty Years Later”, with the participation of the Albert Schweitzer Institute (Quinnipiac University), The Project on Justice in Times of Transition, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The meeting in Toledo is also an opportunity to emphasize the friendship and support that Spain, individually and as a member of the Ibero-American community and the European Union, has been offering Central American states.

### **Tuesday 24 April**

All Day - **Arrival of participants to the Hotel Doménico**  
(Civil Society and Experts)

21:30 h – **Welcome and Dinner**

**Welcome Presentations:**

- **Emilio Cassinello**, Director - General, CITpax
- **Luis Alberto Cordero**, Executive Director, Fundación Arias

### **Wednesday 25 April**

8:30 h – **Introduction of Participants and Methodology**  
Moderator: Carla Morales, Technical Director,  
Fundación Arias

9:00 h – **Opening Panel: General Assessment of the Current State of  
the Peace Process in Central America**

Research Presentation: **Victor Valle**. Dean of Academic  
**Administration** of the Universidad para la Paz (20m)

***Topics for Discussion:*** Detailed description of the signed  
peace accords; the instruments for their implementation  
and the established timeframes; evaluation of compliance  
with the peace accords from the moment of their signature  
to the present, and the outstanding agenda; identification  
of the complementary instruments or accords developed in  
each individual country.

Debate (55m)

10:15 h – Coffee Break

10:45 h – **Presentations by Experts on Specific Topics in the Plenary Session**

(20m presentations followed by 35m of debate on each)  
Moderator: Blanca Antonini, Director of the Latin American Programme, CITpax

**Security Challenges in Central America: Daniel Matul,**

Fundación Arias para la Paz y el Progreso Humano

*Topics for Debate:* Human security; security threats; regional institutionalization, and challenges.

**The State of Democracy and Democratization in Central America:**

**Jairo Acuña-Alfaro,** University of Oxford

*Topics for Debate:* Electoral processes; emergence and consolidation of new political forces; citizen participation; decentralization and local development; transparency and accountability; institutional design and innovations.

**Social and Economic Development in Central America:**

**Álvaro Cáliz,** Universidad Nacional

Autónoma de Honduras

*Topics for Debate:* Poverty; social exclusion (women, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants); unemployment; opportunities for economic development; migrations; education, and the environment.

13:30 h – **Working Lunch for each of the three Topic Groups**  
(at separate tables)

15:00 h - Break

- 16:00 h – **Meeting of Topic Groups-**  
 Formulation of work syntheses  
 (Coffee available in each room)
- Group #1: Security Challenges in Central America  
 Facilitator: **Ana Yancy Espinoza**, Fundación Arias
- Group #2: The State of Democracy and Democratization in Central America  
 Facilitators: **Patricia Pérez-Gómez** and **Juan Garrigues**, CITpax
- Group # 3: Social and Economic Development in Central America  
 Facilitator: **Mauricio Artiñano**, Project on Justice in Times of Transition
- 18:30 - **Debate and finalizing syntheses of work in Plenary Session**
- 20:00 h - Moderator: **Juan Faroppa**, Former Undersecretary of the Interior of Uruguay, and consultant for the United Nations on security matters in Central America
- 21:00 h - Dinner

**Thursday 26 April** – Arrival of Government Representatives

- 10:00 h – **Welcome Presentations**  
**Enrique V. Iglesias**, Secretary-General of the Ibero-American General Secretariat  
**Trinidad Jiménez**, Secretary of State for Ibero-America, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation  
 Greetings from: **Eduardo Stein**, Vice-President of Guatemala  
**Bruno Stagno**, Costa Rican Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship  
**Oscar Santamaría**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, El Salvador  
**Augusto Zamora Rodríguez**, Nicaraguan Ambassador to Spain

- 11:30 h – Coffee Break
- 12 -14:30 h **Presentation of Topic Group syntheses and debate:**
- 12:00 h – **Social and Economic Development**  
Presentation of the Topic Group synthesis by the Rapporteur and debate  
Moderator: **Enrique V. Iglesias**, Secretary-General of the Ibero-American General Secretariat
- 12.45 h - **Strengthening Democracy in Central America**  
Presentation of the Topic Group synthesis by the Rapporteur and debate  
Moderator: **Luis Alberto Cordero**, Executive Director of the Fundación Arias
- 13:30 h – **Security Challenges in Central America**  
Presentation of the Topic Group synthesis by the Rapporteur and debate  
Moderator: **Emilio Cassinello**, Director-General, CITpax
- 14:30 - **Closing Lunch – Junta of Castilla-La Mancha**
- 16:30 h *“Twenty Years after Esquipulas: Peace in Central America and the Role of the International Community”*  
**Fernando Lamata**, Vice-President of the Junta of Castilla-La Mancha  
**Response by the Government Representatives**

## Context of the Project

The meeting in Toledo will be one of three meetings that will be held on occasion of the project, **“A Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America: the Outstanding Agenda Twenty Years Later”**. The project is an initiative of the Fundación Arias para la Paz y el Progreso Humano, and has been developed with the collaboration of the Toledo International Peace Centre (TICpax), the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), the Albert Schweitzer Institute, the Quinnipiac University, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Project on Justice in Times of Transition. The project aims to take advantage of the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Esquipulas II Accords to open up a space for intersectorial and regional dialogue and deliberation on the outstanding agenda of peace in Central America.

The two meetings that will be held after Toledo shall have the following nature and goals:

**Meeting at United Nations Headquarters (New York, 13 June 2007).** In a series of panels open to the public, the Central American reality will be discussed in terms of security and violence, the challenges of democratic consolidation, as well as social and economic development, with the aim of raising awareness among the international community on the role that it can play to support the region in the consolidation of peace.

**Meeting to mark the anniversary of the signing of the Accords (Central America, 7-8 August 2007).** The objectives being as follows: to articulate a regional proposal or declaration renewing the commitments with the regional peace process, and to develop a network of academic and civil society organizations that will be able to support a mechanism of continuous observation. The meeting shall consist of a series of academic workshops, with the participation of civil society leaders, and an official celebratory act to which the six Central American Presidents, together with Panama, will be invited.

## Goals and Methodology

The goal of the Toledo meeting, “Peace in Central America: the Challenges of Security, Democracy, and Development”, is to facilitate the emergence of a space for debate between official representatives and the civil society of the countries that signed the Accords. Addressing the outstanding issues regarding security, democratic institutionalization, and development that will allow for the consolidation of a lasting peace in Central America.

The meeting shall consist of presentations of various studies carried out by experts on the following issues: 1. General assessment of the current state of the peace process; 2. Security challenges; 3. The state of democracy and democratization; and 4. Social and economic development. The meeting will be organized over two days, with meetings in Topic Groups, and a debate with civil society and government representatives.

**First Day:** Presentation of studies carried out by experts followed by a debate with civil society representatives and scholars. During the lunch break and the afternoon of this first day, and before the final debate in plenary session, the participants will divide themselves into three Topic Groups (Security Challenges; the State of Democracy and Democratization; and Social and Economic Development). Within these groups, they shall discuss their respective topics in depth, with the aim of initiating the formulation of a working paper.

**Second Day:** The government representatives shall join the sessions. A Rapporteur will be selected within each Topic Group to present a synthesis of the previous day’s debate. The official representatives will have the opportunity to comment upon each topic, to be included accordingly into the working paper. The meeting shall end with the Working Lunch, “Twenty Years after Esquipulas: Peace in Central America and the Role of the International Community”, with contributions from the representatives of the Spanish and Central American states.

## Project Partners



## List of Participants

### “Peace in Central America: the Challenges of Security, Democracy, and Development”

*Toledo, 24 - 26 April 2007*

**Jairo Acuña-Alfaro**, University of Oxford (Costa Rica).

**Luis Alejandro**, Former Head of the ONUSAL Military Contingent.

**Istwan Alfaro Solano**, Chargé d’Affaires of the Costa Rican Embassy in Madrid.

**Blanca Antonini**, Director of the Latin American Programme, CITpax.

**Mauricio Artiñano**, Project on Justice in Times of Transition.

**Carmen Bartolomé**, Ministry of the Interior.

**Maria Elisa Berenguer**, Deputy Secretary-General, Ibero-American General Secretariat.

**Vega Bouthelier**, Spanish Agency for International Co-operation (AECI).

**Álvaro Cáliz**, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (Honduras).

**Emilio Cassinello**, Director-General, CITpax.

**Magaly Castillo**, Executive Director, Alianza Ciudadana Pro-Justicia (Panama).

**Luis Alberto Cordero**, Executive Director, Fundación Arias.

**Ricardo Córdova Meacías**, President, Asociación Centroamericana de Sociología (El Salvador).

**Carmen Diez Orejas**, Deputy Managing Director of Foreign Policy for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation.

**Pilar Erice**, Ministry of Defence.

**Ana Yancy Espinoza**, Fundación Arias.

**Cristina Faraj Salomón**, First Secretary of the Embassy of Honduras in Madrid.

**Juan Faroppa**, Former Undersecretary of the Interior of Uruguay, and consultant for the United Nations on security matters in Central America.

**Emma Fernandez**, Instituto de Derechos Humanos, Universidad de Deusto.

**Anunciada Fernández de Córdova**, Director General for Ibero-American Multilateral Organizations, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation.

**Cristian Font Calderón**, Director, Tribuna Americana, Casa América.

**Juan Garrigues**, Desk Officer, CITpax.

**Roberto Gereda Taracena**, Guatemalan Ambassador to Spain.

**Suzanne Gratius**, Researcher, Foundation for International Relations and External Dialogue (FRIDE).

**Enrique V. Iglesias**, Secretary-General, Ibero-American General Secretariat.

**Trinidad Jiménez**, Secretary of State for Ibero-America, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation.

**Fernando Lamata**, Vice-President of the Junta of Castilla-La Mancha.

**Covadonga López**, Ministry of Defence.

**Félix Madariaga**, Advisor, Instituto de Estudios Estratégicos y Políticas Públicas (IEEP) (Nicaragua).

**Daniel Matul**, Fundación Arias para la Paz y el Progreso Humano (Guatemala).

**Carla Morales**, Technical Director, Fundación Arias.

**María Salvadora Ortiz Ortiz**, Director of External Relations, Ibero-American General Secretariat.

**Patricia Pérez-Gómez**, Project Coordinator, CITpax.

**Juan Enrique Quiñónez**, Advisor on Political and International Co-operation, Presidential Commission on Human Rights (COPREDEH) (Guatemala).

**Jose Arturo Rodríguez Díaz**, Minister Councillor of the Guatemalan Embassy in Madrid.

**Monseñor Gregorio Rosa Chávez**, Auxiliary Bishop of San Salvador and President for Latin America and the Caribbean, Cáritas International (El Salvador).

**Javier Sandomingo**, Director General of Foreign Policy for Ibero-America, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation.

**Oscar Santamaría**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador.

**Pierre Shori**, Director, Foundation for International Relations and External Dialogue (FRIDE).

**Bruno Stagno**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica.

**Eduardo Stein**, Vice-President of the Republic of Guatemala.

**Victor Valle**, Dean of Academic Administration of the Universidad para la Paz (El Salvador).

**Alicia Velásquez**, K'iche' Anthropologist (Guatemala).

**Evelyn Villareal**, Proyecto Estado de la Nación/Región (Costa Rica).

**Mónica Zalaquett**, Director, Centro de Prevención de Violencia (CEPREV) (Nicaragua).

**Augusto Zamora Rodríguez**, Nicaraguan Ambassador to Spain.



## The Esquipulas II Accords

*Signed by the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua on 7 August 1987.*

### **Procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America**

The Governments of the Republics of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, determined to achieve the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, the Charter of the Organization of American States, the Document of Objectives, the Caraballeda Message for Peace, Security and Democracy in Central America, the Guatemala Declaration, the Punta del Este Communiqué, the Panama Message, the Esquipulas Declaration and the draft Contadora Act of 6 June 1986 on Peace and Co-operation in Central America, have agreed on the following procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America.

### **NATIONAL RECONCILIATION**

#### **Dialogue**

Wherever deep divisions have taken place within society, the Governments agree to urgently undertake actions of national reconciliation which permit popular participation, with full guarantees, in genuine democratic political processes on the basis of justice, freedom and democracy and, to that end, to create mechanisms permitting a dialogue with opposition groups in accordance with the law. To this end, the Governments in question shall initiate a dialogue with all the domestic political opposition groups which have laid down their arms and those which have availed themselves of the amnesty.

#### **Amnesty**

In each Central American country, except those where the International Verification and Follow-up Commission determines this to be unnecessary, amnesty decrees shall be issued which establish all necessary provisions guaranteeing the inviolability of life, freedom in all its forms, property and security of person of those to whom such decrees are applicable. Simultaneously with the issue of amnesty decrees, the irregular forces of the countries in question shall release anyone that they are holding prisoner.

### **National Reconciliation Commission**

To verify fulfilment of the commitments with regard to amnesty, a cease-fire, democratization and free elections entered into by the five Central American Governments in signing this document, a National Reconciliation Commission shall be set up in each country, responsible for verifying genuine implementation of the process of national reconciliation and also unrestricted respect for all the civil and political rights of Central American citizens guaranteed in this document.

The National Reconciliation commission shall be composed of: a representative of the executive branch and his alternate; a representative and an alternate proposed by the Conference of Bishops and chosen by the Government from a list of three bishops. This list shall be submitted within 15 days following receipt of the formal invitation. Governments shall make this invitation within five working days following the signing of this document. The same procedure of proposing three candidates shall be used to choose a representative and an alternate representative of legally registered opposition political parties. The list of three candidates shall be submitted within the same period as indicated above.

Each Central American Government shall also choose an eminent citizen belonging to neither the Government nor the government party, and his alternate, to serve on the Commission.

The agreement or decree setting up the corresponding National Commission shall be communicated immediately to the other Central American Governments.

### **Appeal for an end to hostilities**

The Governments make an urgent appeal that, in those States of the region where irregular or insurgent groups are currently active, agreement be reached to end hostilities. The Governments of those States undertake to take all necessary steps, in accordance with the constitution, to bring about a genuine cease-fire.

### **Democratization**

The Governments undertake to promote an authentic democratic process that is pluralistic and participatory, which entails the promotion of social justice and respect for human rights, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the right of every nation to choose, freely and without outside interference of any kind, its own economic, political and social system. They shall adopt, in a way

that can be verified, measures conducive to the establishment and, where appropriate, improvement of democratic, representative and pluralistic systems that will guarantee the organization of political parties and effective popular participation in the decision-making process and ensure that the various currents of opinion have free access to fair and regular elections based on the full observance of citizens' rights. In order to ensure good faith in the implementation of this process of democratization, it shall be understood that;

(a) There must be complete freedom of television, radio and the press. This complete freedom shall include freedom for all ideological groups to launch and operate communication media and to operate them without prior censorship;

(b) Complete pluralism of political parties must be established. Political groupings shall, in this connection, have broad access to the Communication media and full enjoyment of the rights of association and the power to hold public demonstrations in unrestricted exercise of the right to publicize their ideas orally, in writing and on television, and members of political parties shall enjoy freedom of movement in campaigning for political support;

(c) Likewise, those Central American Governments which are currently imposing a state of siege or emergency shall revoke it, ensuring that a state of law exists in which all constitutional guarantees are fully enforced.

### **Free Elections**

Once the conditions inherent in any democracy have been created, free, pluralistic and fair elections shall be held.

As a joint expression by the Central American States of their desire for reconciliation and lasting peace for their peoples, elections will be held for the Central American Parliament proposed in the Esquipulas Declaration of 25 May 1986. In the above connection, the Presidents expressed their willingness to move ahead with the organization of the Parliament. To that end, the Preparatory Commission for the Central American Parliament shall complete its deliberations and submit the corresponding draft treaty to the Central American Presidents within 150 days.

Elections shall be held simultaneously in all the countries of Central America in the first six months of 1988, at a date to be agreed in due course by the Presidents of the Central American states. They shall be subject to supervision by the corresponding electoral bodies, and the Governments concerned undertake to invite the organization of American States, the United Nations and the Governments of third States to send observers to verify that the electoral process has been governed by the strictest rules of equal access for all political parties to the

communication media and by ample opportunities for organizing public demonstrations and any other type of political propaganda.

With a view to enabling the elections to the Central American Parliament to be held within the period indicated, the treaty establishing the Parliament shall be submitted for approval or ratification in the five countries. Once the elections for the Central American Parliament have been held, equally free and democratic elections for the appointment of popular representatives to municipalities, congress, the legislative assembly and the office of the President of the Republic shall be held in each country, with international observers and the same guarantees, within the established time-limits and subject to time tables to be proposed in accordance with each country's current constitution.

#### **Non-Use of territory to attack other States**

The five countries signing this document reiterate their commitment to prevent the use of their own territory by persons, organizations or groups seeking to destabilize the Governments of Central American countries and to refuse to provide them with or allow them to receive military and logistical support.

#### **Termination of aid for irregular forces and insurrectionist movements**

The Governments of the five Central American States shall request Governments of the region and Governments from outside the region which are providing either overt or covert military, logistical, financial or propaganda support, in the form of men, weapons, munitions and equipment, to irregular forces or insurrectionist movements to terminate such aid; this is vital if a stable and lasting peace is to be attained in the region.

The above does not cover aid for the repatriation or, failing that, the relocation and necessary assistance with reintegration into normal life of former members of such groups or forces. The Central American Governments shall also request the irregular forces and insurgent groups operating in Central America to refrain from receiving such aid in order to demonstrate a genuine spirit of Latin Americanism.

These requests shall be made pursuant to the provision of the Document of Objectives which calls for eliminating the traffic in arms, whether within the region or from outside it, intended for persons, organizations or groups seeking to destabilize the Governments of Central American countries.

### **Refugees and Displaced Persons**

The Central American Governments undertake to attend, as a matter of urgency, to the flows of refugees and displaced persons caused by the crisis in the region, providing them with protection and assistance, particularly in the areas of health, education, work and safety, and to facilitate their repatriation, resettlement or relocation provided that this is voluntary and carried out on an individual basis.

They also undertake to seek assistance from the international community for Central American refugees and displaced persons, to be provided either directly, through bilateral or multilateral agreements, or indirectly, through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other organizations and agencies.

### **Co-Operation, democracy and freedom for peace development**

In the climate of freedom guaranteed by democracy, the Central American countries shall adopt such agreements as will help to speed up development, in order to make their societies more egalitarian and free from misery.

The strengthening of democracy entails creating a system of economic and social well-being and justice. To achieve these goals, the Governments shall jointly seek special economic assistance from the international community.

## **INTERNATIONAL VERIFICATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

### **International Verification and Follow-up Commission**

An International Verification and Follow-up Commission shall be established consisting of the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, or his representative, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, or his representative, and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Central America, the Contadora Group and the Support Group. This Commission shall be responsible for verifying and monitoring fulfilment of the commitments set forth in this document.

### **Support and facilities for reconciliation and verification and follow-up bodies**

In order to reinforce the efforts of the International Verification and Follow-up Commission, the Governments of the five Central American States shall issue statements of support for its work. All nations interested in promoting the cause of freedom, democracy and peace in Central America may adhere to these statements.

The five Governments shall provide all necessary facilities for the proper conduct of the verification and follow-up functions of the National Reconciliation Commission in each country and the International Verification and Follow-up Commission.

#### **Timetable for fulfilment of Commitments**

Within a period of 15 days from the signing of this document, the Central American Ministers for Foreign Affairs shall meet as an Executive Commission to regulate, encourage and facilitate compliance with the agreements contained in this document and to organize working commissions so that, as of that date, the processes leading to fulfilment of the agreed commitments within the stipulated periods can be set in motion by means of consultations, negotiations and any other mechanism which are deemed necessary.

Ninety days after the signing of this document, the commitments with regard to amnesty, a cease-fire, democratization, termination of aid to irregular forces or insurrectionist movements, and the non-use of territory to attack other States, as defined in this document, shall enter into force simultaneously and be made public.

One hundred and twenty days after the signing of this document, the International Verification and Follow-up Commission shall review the progress made in complying with the agreements set forth in this document.

One hundred and fifty days after the signing of this document, the five Central American Presidents shall meet to receive a report from the International Verification and Follow-up Commission and shall take the relevant decisions.

#### **Final Provisions**

The elements set forth in this document form a harmonious and indivisible whole. By signing it, the Central American States accept in good faith the obligation to comply simultaneously with what has been agreed within the established time-limits.

We, the Presidents of the five Central American States, having the political will to respond, to our peoples' desire for peace, sign this document at Guatemala City on 7 August 1987.

**Oscar Arias Sánchez**  
**Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo**  
**Daniel Ortega Saavedra**

**José Napoleón Duarte**  
**José Azcona Hoyo**

## Map of Central America



Source: <http://www.reisenett.no>



# ABOUT THE TOLEDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE

([www.toledopax.org](http://www.toledopax.org))

The Toledo International Centre for Peace (CITpax) seeks to contribute to the prevention and resolution of violent or potentially violent international or intra-national conflicts and to the consolidation of peace, within a framework of respect and promotion of Human Rights and democratic values. Thus, the CITpax contributes to the establishment of cooperation pathways and communication channels between the parties involved, governments, NGO's and representatives of all sectors in the civil society.

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## ACTION PATHWAYS

In order to achieve its objectives, the CITpax employs various tools specially designed for each particular situation, including the following:

- **Second Track Diplomacy**, through the direct facilitation in negotiation processes between relevant political and economic actors, in conflicts where a dialogue pathway becomes necessary to complement or break the deadlock in the official track.
- **Multi-Track Diplomacy and Dialogue Facilitation**, through the creation of dialogue platforms among scholars, experts, activists, local authorities and governing bodies, as well as assisting the development of peace-building capacities in conflict areas.
- **Field Projects**, aimed at improving the capacities for conflict prevention and resolution through confidence-building, research and advocacy of feasible peace policies.
- **Research and Policy Development** of peace-related issues.
- **Professional Development and Training**, seeking to enhance the capacities of practitioners from different institutions working on peace-related issues.
- **Public Awareness and Advocacy**, through information dissemination, policy-oriented publishing and participation in the public debate.

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## PROGRAMMES

Notwithstanding a progressive extension of its working field to other areas, such as Southeast Europe, the CITpax current activities and projects are divided into three main programmes: two geographical programmes, one centred on Africa and the Middle East, and the other on Latin America, and the Conflict Prevention and Resolution Programme, which thematically complements and supports the regional programmes.

### Africa and the Middle East

In the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, CITpax is exploring Track II diplomatic tools to enhance ongoing negotiations and the status of the peace process. The Programme also intends to progressively address some of the core challenges of the region, such as the conditions for the establishment of a cooperation and security system in the Middle East. Addressing regional conflicts, discreet efforts are being made to bring regional parties to explore venues for strengthening local peaceful resolutions. Focusing on the reconstruction of post-war Iraq and the enhancement of civil society in several countries in the Middle East, such as Syria and Lebanon. CITpax is also engaged in

the North Africa context, with an emphasis on the Western Sahara conflict and the future of economic integration in the Maghreb. Lastly, the programme is engaged in exploring conflict management tools related to natural resources such as water and oil.

#### Areas of Activity:

- Regional Stability in the Middle East
- Emphasis on the Palestinian Israeli conflict
- Economic Integration of the Maghreb
- Transition to democracy

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([www.toledopax.org](http://www.toledopax.org))

## Latin America

The programme has the following fields of activity: (1) in Colombia, CITpax facilitates dialogue between various groups on key issues emanating from the armed conflict and promotes the consolidation of institutions and mechanisms relevant to the pursuit of peace; (2) in the Andean region, it undertakes initiatives of a subregional scope to deepen the understanding of, and promote respect for, political, cultural and ethnic diversity and to foster confidence; (3) it promotes "benign borders" and good neighbourly relations between countries in Latin America in areas that are subject to tension or particularly vulnerable, primarily through initiatives that foster confidence among neighbouring communities; and (4) encourages political dialogue among Latin American countries as a means to ease bilateral and intra-regional tensions and to

support understanding and consensus-building at the regional and subregional levels. In order to identify specific areas of intervention and strengthen cooperation with its Latin American partners and interlocutors, CITpax undertakes missions to countries in the region.

### Areas of Activity:

- Encouragement of political dialogue at the regional and subregional levels
- Institutional stability in the Andean Region
- Alternatives to the Colombian conflict
- Promotion of "benign borders" and good neighbourly relations

## Conflict Prevention and Resolution

The focus of this programme is threefold: 1) to analyse and support peace processes through the means of Track II diplomacy; 2) to monitor and assist countries undergoing situations of transitional justice while promoting peace-building and democracy; and 3) from the perspective of conflict prevention, to promote the adoption of concrete measures to mitigate the underlying causes of conflicts.

The projects and activities of the programme are embedded within the broader concept of human security and aspire to its realization. Within this framework and via the practical study of international responses to crisis situations, including international armed interventions, the programme aims at strengthening the civil dimension of international crisis management and the establishment of frameworks to permit

adequate coordination with the military dimension.

### Areas of Activity:

- Peace processes and peace-building
- Crisis management and regional and international responses to conflict
- Transitional justice and strengthening of the Rule of Law
- Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR)
- Strengthening of civil society and support for the most vulnerable sectors
- Role of the media in peace processes

## STRUCTURE AND PERSONNEL

Shlomo Ben-Ami, Executive Vice-President  
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Claudia Medina, Projects Director

Pilar Sánchez-Bella, Personal Assistant to the Vice-President  
Alba Marcellán, Colombia Programme Assistant

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Patricia Pérez-Gómez, Projects Coordinator  
Juan Garrigues, Desk Officer

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Shireen Dajani, Programme Assistant

### Conflict Prevention and Resolution Programme

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María Paula Torres, Funding and Project Cycle Management

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**Trustees:**



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Carlos Westendorp, Spanish Ambassador to the United States

## Advisory Council:

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Pierre Schori, Former Special Envoy Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Cote d'Ivoire.  
Francesc Vendrell, Special Representative of the UE for Afghanistan.  
Federico Mayor Zaragoza, former Director-General of the UNESCO.

\* In absentia, while in office

## Corporate Advisory Council:

### Strategic Partners:



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