



FINAL DECLARATION
Second Inter-American Meeting of Experts and
Representatives of Electoral Organizations
Caracas, June 11th and 12th, 2009

***“Towards the construction of a referential framework of
procedures to manage and control electoral processes”***

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Whereas

Resolution AG/RES. 2428 (XXXVIII-0/08) “Modernization and Use of Electoral Technology in the hemisphere”, whereby the General Assembly of the Organization of American States gladly approved the offer of hosting the “Second Inter-American Meeting of Experts and Representatives of Electoral Bodies” on behalf of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, with the purpose of organizing a new exchange of experiences and best practices in the hemisphere’s countries concerning elector identification systems, voter registration procedures and automatic electoral systems, among other topics, and the conclusions of which would be submitted to the Sixth Inter-American meeting of Electoral Authorities;

BEARING IN MIND that the General Assembly expressed its appreciation to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela’s National Electoral Council for celebrating the Inter-American Meeting of Experts and Representatives of Electoral Bodies of OAS Member States in Caracas on the 3rd and 4th of April, 2008;

BEARING IN MIND that the General Assembly requested the Permanent Council to convene the Second Inter-American Meeting of Experts and Representatives of Electoral Organs, to take place in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in 2009;

HIGHLIGHTING the speech of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela’s President of the Electoral Power at the OAS Permanent Council’s March 18th Session of the present year, in which the advances of Venezuela’s electoral system were made reference to; guaranteeing the exercise of participatory and protagonist democracy, and apprised about the holding of the Second Inter-American Meeting of Experts and



Representatives of Electoral Organs in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in June 2009;

RESTATING that the OAS' General Assembly pointed out the efforts that Member States'

electoral authorities are fulfilling in electoral organization and administration, in order to increase the quality and transparency of their electoral processes, including the use of new electoral technologies;

EMPHASIZING that the General Assembly, to these purposes, underlined the desirability of promoting cooperation and exchange of experiences in the areas of electoral legislation and electoral technologies with other international and regional organizations;

CELEBRATING that the presence as observers of the electoral authorities of the Republic of Mali, of the President of Gaston Berger University in the Republic of Senegal and the Chief Officer of the Presidency of the United Nations General Assembly;

RECOGNIZING that the security guarantees and auditing capacity in each of the electoral process' phases ensure the trust and transparency of the electoral process, a condition which is strengthened by the participation of political actors and its spread to all citizens;

RECOGNIZING that electoral bodies and authorities apply common criteria and procedures to all electoral processes that seek to guarantee the exercise and the inviolability of the vote;

The Experts and Representatives of the Electoral Bodies conclude the following:

1. To emphasize the importance of constructing a framework of reference for optimal management procedures and the control of electoral processes, whether manual or automatic, which guarantee the capacity of auditing electoral processes in the hemisphere's countries.

2. To agree that the technical knowledge accumulated by the hemisphere's electoral bodies and authorities can be shared, systematized and improved, in order to create relative standards that



reflect the particularities of voting systems, and of the peoples and cultures where these are implemented.

3. To continue processes of exchange between electoral bodies with the purpose of achieving a technical and procedural unity, which –as a compendium– would systematize optimal criteria and procedures, and those of best quality for the management and control of electoral systems in the region’s countries, adapted to the particularities of each nation, people or culture.

4. To welcome the proposal of the Electoral Power of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to organize, during the second term of 2009, a meeting of Electoral Bodies and Authorities of UNASUR member states, which would take place in Venezuela.

5. To welcome the proposal of the Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic to subscribe to an agreement of horizontal cooperation with the National Electoral Council of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to carry out some automatic voting pilot schemes during the elections due to take place in May 2010.

6. To welcome the initiative of the Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic to organize a Preparatory Meeting to the Third Inter-American Meeting of Experts and Representatives of Electoral Bodies of Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) in that country during the second semester of 2009, where today’s themes would be carried on and deepened.

7. To ratify the commitment of electoral authorities of member countries of the Organization of American States during the Fifth Inter-American Meeting of Electoral Authorities, to develop engaged and constant cooperation with Haiti in electoral matters.

8. To welcome the initiative of the National Electoral Council of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to craft a Framework Agreement of Electoral Cooperation with the Republic of Haiti’s Conseil Electoral Provisoire.

9. To confirm the tendency in terms of running for election in the participating countries at the event is to assume efficiency, transparency and simplicity criteria, and to cut costs in light of a complex process with increasing participation and a high number of electable positions, where the constant factor is the take-up of technological tools that contribute



to the safeguarding of the database of those running and minimize errors in the development of electoral instruments.

10. *To agree upon the selection, notification and training processes of those making up second order electoral bodies, are similar in all countries, so that the functioning of polling stations can be improved, in view of what is established in Colombian legislation in relation to double-turn functioning. We observe that the form of integration of electoral bodies is set towards diminishing the partisan content of polling stations.*

11. *To recognize the existence of regulatory mechanisms for electoral campaigns, which become difficult to implement by the bodies in charge; this entails the need to search for a platform that favors the establishment of processes that are respectful of the democratic principles of equal conditions and the right of voters to receive equitable information about participating options.*

12. *To recognize that, at a general level, there is great anxiety to achieve the adequate level of control in electoral financing, however we see an absence of mechanisms to reduce and detect the risk of irregularities in obtaining and using available resources; as with the case of applying automatic systems that may optimize vigilance of controlling bodies when facilitating the uptake of necessary information to carry out relevant evaluations.*

13. *To acknowledge the importance of witnesses and representatives of political organizations is important in all the critical steps of the electoral processes, as well as ensuring that these can call on the necessary tools to provide validity and legitimacy to said process.*

14. *To agree upon the effect of improving summing-up times and guaranteeing the integrity of information, rendering the process of publishing results automatic is important, as much in automatic voting systems as in manual ones.*

15. *To agree upon the electoral instruments must be practical, simple and verifiable, and their production as well as their distribution should be held under criteria of reliability, transparency and resource rationality.*

16. *To assume the best practices put forward in terms of the electoral register would lead us to attain the objective of promoting and*



guaranteeing the registration of voters in better ways, increasing political participation and trust in the electoral system.

17. To acknowledge the need to make an effort so that voters, political organizations and the general population achieve a good level of understanding, as well as knowing and valuing the multiple processes that the elaboration of the electoral register implies.

18. To procure and facilitate processes for the inclusion of people that have been traditionally excluded from the civil and electoral register in countries where this may be the case.

19. To agree upon the need of setting maximum and minimum limits that permit the openness and correct functioning of polling sites, considering and respecting the special characteristics of communities as defined by each country.

20. To promote before the Inter-American relevant entities, the analysis of the topic on electoral justice, specially, on the regime of dispute settlement, challenging mechanisms, access to electoral justice and electoral jurisprudence.

In consequence thereof, we recommend:

- 1. To submit the conclusions of this Second Inter-American Meeting to the Sixth Inter-American Meeting of Electoral Authorities, especially the recognition of the electoral-technical wealth that the hemisphere's electoral bodies and authorities possess for creating guarantees of trust and transparency in the electoral process.*
- 2. To present during the Third Inter-American Meeting of Experts and Representatives of Electoral Bodies, to take place in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in 2010, the compendium of common criteria and optimal procedures that electoral bodies and authorities make use of to guarantee the management and control of electoral processes, whether manual or automatic, and the conclusions which would be submitted to the Seventh Inter-American Meeting of Electoral Authorities.*
- 3. To propose the creation of an exchange mechanism that would allow us to review general definitions about the regulation of electoral campaigns that take into account different realities, identify common weaknesses and work within the aforementioned platform.*