



Corruption is widely considered to be one of the biggest threats to security in the Americas. Living conditions in the region would improve with the promotion of measures that increase transparency and access to public information, as well as through initiatives that seek cooperation and civil society participation in the fight against corruption nationally and within the Organization of American States (OAS).

Based on this premise, Transparency International (TI) hereby presents recommendations to be included by States Parties in the Declaration of the 2010 General Assembly and as part of thematic resolutions related to the fight against corruption. TI and the 16 organisations that it works with throughout the region, hopes that its recommendations will contribute to the debate and progress towards a region free of corruption.

I. DECLARATION OF LIMA: PEACE, SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN THE AMERICAS

1. The OAS must promote access to public information on defense budgets based on an "injury test", i.e. when the damage caused by not publishing certain information exceeds the benefits of publication.
2. The OAS must promote open public contracting processes when purchasing weapons. This should be included in article 8 of the Declaration.
3. The OAS must support civil society participation in monitoring the implementation of the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons and states should include information on the amounts spent in their annual report of the Convention's implementation.
4. The OAS must promote the fight against corruption in the institutions responsible for guaranteeing citizens' security and the protection of civil rights.

II. STRENGTHENING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY

FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION

1. During the third evaluation round of the Follow-up mechanism of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (MESICIC), the Committee of Experts responsible for overseeing implementation, should begin on-site visits as part of the country review process, as set forth in Article 33 of the MESICIC Rules of Procedure. TI recommends that the MESICIC Conference of States Parties (CoSP) adopt a methodology for conducting these visits as currently employed by the OECD Working Group on Bribery. This working group has been carrying on-site reviews since the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials came into force in 1999. Only on-site visits will make it possible to assess progress in the Convention's implementation, country by country, in a reliable and responsible manner.

2. States Parties should require that a clear profile of experts carrying out visits is established, including requiring a high level of technical expertise and independence which would qualify them to issue recommendations to states concerning the implementation of the articles under review during each evaluation period.
3. States Parties should publish action plans and annual progress reports on the recommendations issued to them by the Committee of Experts, and civil society must be involved in the preparation of such plans.
4. States Parties should institutionalise the participation of civil society organisations in Committee of Experts meetings, and civil society organisations should serve as permanent observers of the Committee's work.
5. States Parties should provide financial support to civil society organisations so that they may continue their necessary and meaningful engagement in the MESICIC, including the preparation of reports, attendance at Committee meetings, and permanent involvement during the entire session of the Committee.
6. The MESICIC Secretariat should agree upon a set of indicators with the States Parties that help assess the level of implementation of the IACAC, based on hard data and objective information.
7. The MESICIC Secretariat should systematise and disseminate best-practice tools for the implementation of the IACAC.
8. The MESICIC CoSP should meet in 2010 and annually thereafter as it is essential that a yearly evaluation of IACAC compliance be performed.
9. The MESICIC CoSP should adopt a strategy of coordination of the IACAC and UN Convention against Corruption monitoring systems, pursuant to item 7 of the Inter-American Program of Cooperation to Fight Corruption.

ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION

1. State Parties should approve the Model Inter-American Law on Access to Public Information and the implementation Guide for the Model Inter-American Law on Access to Information prepared by the Group of Experts on Access to Information of the OAS Department of International Law.

TRANSPARENCY IN POLITICAL FINANCE

1. States should require the internal accounting of political parties and electoral campaigns.
2. Political parties and candidates should keep accounting books and provide the legally-corresponding electoral bodies or tax authorities with updated financial reports.
3. The OAS should promote and support states in the modernisation of electoral bodies as well as the implementation of accountability mechanisms for political parties and candidates.
4. Political parties, candidates and the electoral body should be required by law to fully disclose information regarding the funding of political parties and election campaigns.
5. The OAS and states must stimulate and support civil society initiatives that monitor political finance and increase its transparency.

III. STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY'S PARTICIPATION IN OAS ACTIVITIES

1. The OAS should adopt the Strategy for Increasing and Strengthening Participation by Civil Society Organisations in OAS Activities, to make participation more inclusive and effective within OAS activities.
2. The OAS must eliminate all restrictions to civil society participation and the veto right of states on the registry of organisations in the OAS and any other OAS activities. In 2009, this veto was used without justification against a group of civil society organisations.
3. Civil society participation has been damaged and limited since 2004 by the repeated rejection of the report drafted by Transparencia Venezuela in the framework of the monitoring of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. Therefore, the OAS must eliminate restrictions to civil society participation in the MESICIC amending article 34 of the rules of procedure of the Committee of Experts.

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL IN THE AMERICAS

Argentina	Poder Ciudadano	www.poderciudadano.org
Bolivia	Transparencia Bolivia	www.transparenciabolivia.org
Canada	Transparency International Canada	www.transparency.ca
Chile	Chile Transparente	www.chiletransparente.org
Colombia	Transparencia por Colombia	www.transparenciacolombia.org.co
Dominican Republic	Participación Ciudadana	www.pciudadana.org
El Salvador	Funde	www.funde.org
Guatemala	Acción Ciudadana	www.accionciudadana.org.gt
Mexico	Transparencia Mexicana	www.tm.org.mx
Nicaragua	Ética y Transparencia	www.eyt.org.ni
Panama	Fundación para la Libertad Democrática	www.libertadciudadana.org
Peru	Proética	www.proetica.org.pe
Trinidad & Tobago	The Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute	www.transparency.org.tt
United States	Transparency International USA	www.transparency-usa.org
Uruguay	Uruguay Transparente	www.uruguaytransparente.org.uy
Venezuela	Transparencia Venezuela	www.transparencia.org.ve

TI collaborates with civil society organisations in those countries where there is not a formal ally.

For more information visit www.transparency.org/americas/conventions or contact the regional conventions team at TI's Secretariat:

Marta Erquicia

Senior Programme Coordinator
merquicia@transparency.org
Tel: +511 992906157

Ximena Salazar

OAS Liason
xsalazar@transparency.org