

AG/RES. 2419 (XXXVIII-O/08)

SUPPORT FOR ENHANCED INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION  
WITH THE AFRICAN UNION

(Adopted at the fourth plenary session, held on June 3, 2008)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

AWARE of the historical bonds and shared experiences which tie together the American and African continents, the fundamental contributions of persons of African descent and their communities in the Americas, and the importance of recognizing and preserving that heritage;

COMMITTED, through regional and interregional cooperation, to support states in their efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, values, practices, and governance, to fight corruption, to enhance the rule of law, to bring about the full exercise of human rights, and to reduce poverty, hunger, inequity, and social exclusion;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the presentations made during the special meeting of the Permanent Council on December 11, 2002, regarding Western Hemisphere-Africa cooperation, resolution 1631 (2005) of the United Nations Security Council, "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security," and resolution AG/RES. 2016 (XXXIV-0/04), "Cooperation between the Organization of American States and the United Nations System, the General Secretariat of the Central Integration System, and the General Secretariat of the Caribbean Community";

BEARING MIND that, in recognition of racial discrimination against persons of African descent in the Americas, in February 2005 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) established a Special Rapporteurship on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination;

NOTING the progress achieved by the Working Group to Prepare a Draft Inter-American Convention against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance;

RECALLING the commitments of the inter-American and African systems to the regional promotion and protection of human rights, as reflected in instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, and the American Convention on Human Rights;

RECOGNIZING that democracy, transparent, responsible, accountable, and participatory governance responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people, and respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law are essential for the effective prevention and elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance;

CONSIDERING that countries of Africa and the Americas, in the framework of bilateral and multilateral forums, have committed themselves to encourage regional and interregional initiatives to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and to exchange experiences with other regional organizations, including the African Union, in matters of strengthening democracy at regional and interregional levels through the Organization of American States (OAS);

AWARE that the 2003 Declaration of Mexico [CIDI/RME/DEC. 4 (III-O/03)], adopted by the Ministers of Education of the Hemisphere, recognized the importance of raising cultural awareness and promoting democratic values in present and future generations, especially in education, as a key means of alleviating poverty and fostering greater understanding among peoples; and that the 2008 Declaration of African Union Ministers in Charge of Youth recognized the “role of the African youth in the Diaspora” and the “urgent need to promote African Youth and to enhance youth involvement in the African development agenda”;

RECOGNIZING the value of collaborative sharing of experiences and best practices for the deepening and implementation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG), adopted on January 30, 2007;

RECALLING that both the Inter-American Democratic Charter, in Chapter VI, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance, in Chapter 5, affirm the importance of civil society organizations and civic education for the strengthening of democratic culture;

RECALLING ALSO that the Inter-American Democratic Charter, in Chapter III (Democracy, Integral Development and Combating Poverty), Articles 11 and 12, recognizes that democracy and social and economic development are interdependent, and that “[p]overty, illiteracy, and low levels of human development are factors that adversely affect the consolidation of democracy”;

CONSIDERING that in July 2007 the African Union established a diplomatic representational mission in Washington, D.C., and that, beginning in 2002, the African Union has collaborated with the Western Hemisphere African Diaspora Network to engage with the Diaspora community and persons of African descent;

NOTING WITH SATISFACTION the July 10 to 12, 2007, forum entitled “Democracy Bridge: Multilateral Regional Efforts for the Promotion and Defense of Democracy in Africa and America,” which included the participation of senior officials from the African Union and the OAS;

RECALLING that the World Conference on Human Rights reaffirmed the right to development, as established in the Declaration on the Right to Development, as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights. As stated in the Declaration on the Right to Development, the human person is the central subject of development. While development facilitates the enjoyment of all human rights, the lack of development may not be invoked to justify the abridgement of internationally recognized human rights. States should cooperate with each other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development. The international community should promote an effective international cooperation for the realization of the right to development and the elimination of obstacles to development. Lasting progress towards the implementation of the right to development requires effective development policies at the national level, as well as equitable economic relations and a favorable economic environment at the international level;

REAFFIRMING that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social, and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives and that, while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy;

AWARE that “[t]he effective exercise of representative democracy is the basis for the rule of law and of the constitutional regimes of the member states of the Organization of American States” and that one of the essential purposes of the OAS is “[t]o promote and consolidate representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of nonintervention”; and

REAFFIRMING that the participatory nature of democracy in our countries in different aspects of public life contributes to the consolidation of democratic values and to freedom and solidarity in the Hemisphere,

RESOLVES:

1. To improve cooperation between the Organization of American States (OAS) and regional organizations; to encourage the adoption of regional democracy charters and cooperative initiatives and, where these exist, to support their implementation; and to strengthen the capacities of regional organizations through the sharing of best practices, keeping in mind existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

2. To express support for deepened cooperation between the African Union and the OAS and, in particular:

- a. To express support for the “Declaration of Intent” signed on July 10, 2007, between the General Secretariat of the Organization and the African Union Commission (AUC), which calls for future cooperation between the AUC and the General Secretariat of the OAS on areas of common interest to “include *inter alia* democracy promotion”; and
- b. To urge member states, permanent observers, and other international organizations to strengthen their support for ongoing engagement between the two organizations, such as the sharing of best practices.

3. To request the General Secretariat, in consultation with the AUC, to develop a framework document guiding interorganizational cooperation in areas of mutual interest, to include *inter alia* democracy promotion, the promotion and protection of human rights, and cooperation for economic and social development, for consideration by the Permanent Council. This framework might include, for example, the exchange of lessons learned and best practices in the area of democracy promotion and human rights, as well as measures to fight hunger and poverty and promote social inclusion.

4. To encourage the Secretary General to prepare a report for presentation to the Permanent Council noting best practices and challenges for enhanced interregional cooperation.

5. To instruct the Permanent Council to convene a second special meeting on cooperation between the Americas and Africa, with the participation of the African diplomatic corps and representatives of the AUC, during the second half of 2008.

6. To request the Permanent Council and the General Secretariat to carry out the activities mentioned in this resolution in accordance with the resources allocated in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.

7. To request the Permanent Council to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth regular session on the implementation of this resolution, the execution of which shall be

subject to the availability of financial resources in the program-budget of the Organization and other resources.

8. To request the Secretary General to forward this resolution to the Chairperson of the AUC, the Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Presidency Pro Tempore of MERCOSUR, the Secretary General of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), and the United Nations Secretary-General. To consider sending it as well to the Chair of the Community of Democracies Convening Group.