

Organization of American States

The OAS, or, as it is known in the three other official languages, OEA) is a regional international organization, headquartered in Washington, D.C. The notion of closer hemispheric union in America was first put forward by Simón Bolívar. who, at the 1826 Congress of Panama, proposed creating a league of American republics, with a common military, a mutual defense pact, and a supranational parliamentary assembly, but this never happened.

The Ninth International Conference of American States was held in Bogotá between March and May 1948 and led by United States Secretary of State George Marshall, a meeting which led to a pledge by members to fight communism in America. This was the event that saw the birth of the OAS as it stands today, with the signature by 21 American countries of the Charter of the Organization of American States on 30 April 1948 (in effect since December 1951). The meeting also adopted the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, the world's first general human rights instrument. The transition from the Pan American Union to OAS was smooth. The Director General of the former, Alberto Lleras Camargo, became the Organization's first Secretary General. The current Secretary General is former Chilean foreign minister José Miguel Insulza.

Significant milestones in the history of the OAS since the signing of the Charter have included the following:

1959: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights created.

1961: Charter of Punta del Este signed, launching the Alliance for Progress.

1962: OAS suspends Cuba

1969: American Convention on Human Rights signed (in force since 1978).

1970: OAS General Assembly established as the Organization's supreme decision-making body.

1979: Inter-American Court of Human Rights created.

1991: Adoption of Resolution 1080, which requires the Secretary General to convene the Permanent Council within ten days of a coup d'état in any member country.

1994: First Summit of America (Miami), which resolved to establish a Free Trade Area of America by 2005.

2001: Inter-American Democratic Charter adopted.

2009: OAS revokes 1962 suspension of Cuba

2009: OAS suspends Honduras due to the coup which ousted president Manuel Zelaya

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization_of_American_States]

