



DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES OF THE PASCA PROJECT: CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION AT THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

THE SHARED OBJECTIVE

To strengthen and maintain democracy in the continent and to have democracy be a guarantee for a dignified life for all people, which includes respect for fundamental rights and protection to all minorities and vulnerable populations.

CONTEXT

The main objective of the PASCA Project is to design and establish an effective and sustainable mechanism for the participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in the Summit of the Americas, which is one of many places in existence to foster dialog between civil society and governments. Its specific objectives are:

1. **Create and implement** a mechanism (Council, delegation, committee) of CS that articulates the CSO of the region.
2. Increase the collaboration for the consult and commitment between the CSO and OAS for **present recommendations** for the Summit of 2018.
3. Improve the capacities of the CS to **monitor the implementation of the mandates impacts** of the 2015 Summit and for **participate efficiently** in the 2018 Summit.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF PASCA

In order to achieve our shared objectives, we have developed a three year action plan (from october 2015 to september 2018) and are calling for the commitment and mobilization of OSCs throughout the region around these principles:

1. **Defense and promotion of Democracy.** Democracy, despite its imperfections, is the system of government and politics that offers the most opportunities to achieve sustainable development at an individual and collective level in a framework of respect to liberties, guarantee of rights and proportional obligations to all citizens. As it is the best scenario available to live in society, we support the strengthening and maintenance of democracy in the continent.





2. **Defense and promotion of Human Rights and the Rights of Nature.** Although we understand that the diversity of interests of CSOs generate different and even opposing perspectives and pursuits, we believe that the construction and promotion of Civil Society agendas towards governments and decision-making entities must always recognize and respect the Rights of Nature and Human Rights, without distinction or discrimination.
3. **Defense and promotion of Sustainable Development,** as a goalpost that represents the balance between economic growth, environmental responsibility, social inclusion and good governance.
4. **Defense of freedoms of assembly, association and expression,** as the minimum requirements for Civil Society to carry out its activities. Two elements are key for Civil Society and social actors to act: **an enabling environment** (the conditions that allow organizations and people to act freely in the public sphere without endangering their safety and integrity) and **a fortified Civil Society,** able to call upon different perspectives and pursue its interests in decision-making spaces.
5. **Social inclusion, respect and defense of diversity,** in a framework of Human Rights and promotion of personal liberties.
6. **Solidarity,** as we are convinced that the causes that unite us are more important than those that separate us, and that these causes transcend geographic, thematic or populational boundaries.
7. **Glocality,** since local pursuits and actions are not divorced from global dynamics in the interrelated, interconnected and interdependent context in which we act.
8. **Responsibility,** since we as Civil Society and social actors participate in the public debate and in the spaces and institutions where democracy is exercised - we are not only "beneficiaries", but we are also responsible for its implementation and improvement.
9. **Organizational and administrative transparency,** as a social practice guided by sincerity and free access to information, which is key for building and maintaining the relations of trust that collective processes demand.
10. **Networking, coordination and articulation,** as a prerequisite to achieving a level of incidence that would not be possible in an isolated manner, and that connects different scales (local, national, subregional and hemispheric) with a complementary and cross-cutting thematic and populational focus.
11. **Dialog and initiative.** To achieve their purposes, Civil Society and social actors have several mechanisms at their disposal: denouncement, expression of discontent, dialog, social mobilization, proposal construction and implementation, and social oversight and control. We firmly believe that





argumentation and collective action are more powerful than violent confrontation.

12. **Constant learning**, since self-evaluation is fundamental to increase our capacity for dialog and action. We are constantly reviewing good (and bad) practices and lessons learned from previous experiences to correct them.
13. **Qualified and impactful participation**. This is a big challenge for CSOs, since we aim to measure our impact in decisions and changes effectively enacted, and not simply in meetings carried out or in statements published.

PASCA OPPORTUNITIES

After these considerations, PASCA presents an opportunity to:

1. To make possible the **Permanent Inter-American Forum for Civil Society** and implement a continuous process of consultation, proposal and monitoring of national commitments.
2. **To independently monitor** the governments of the Americas in their compliance of commitments signed in our name in different international fora.
3. **To help position issues or suggest mandates** that governments obfuscate for diverse reasons, and to promote social accounting in each country in order to guarantee compliance with signed commitments.
4. **To achieve collective incidence** for participating CSOs in international spaces such as the OAS, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) or the European Union, thanks to the legitimacy gained from this Forum or Council.
5. **To have CSOs be recognized as actors with full participation rights** in relevant spaces, such as the Summit of the Americas.

