

**VI MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF HIGH OFFICIALS OF
THE SUMMIT OF SOUTH AMERICAN-ARAB COUNTRIES
Quito, Ecuador, February 26-27, 2010**

FINAL REPORT

Following up on the Second Summit of South American-Arab Countries, held in Doha on March 31, 2009, the ASPA High Officials held their sixth meeting in the city of Quito, Ecuador, the 26th and 27th of February of 2010.

The meeting was co-chaired by doctor Arturo Cabrera, Under-Secretary for Multilateral Affairs, and Ambassador Alfonso López, Director of the Summit Follow-up Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Integration of Ecuador, in the capacity of *Pro Tempore* Presidency of UNASUR; Ambassador Saif Bin Moqadem Alboainain, Assistant Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar, Chair of the Arab Summit; Ambassador Ibrahim Mohieldeen, Director of the Department for the Americas of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States (ASPA Regional Coordinator for the Arab countries); and Ambassador Gilberto Moura, Director of the Department of Regional Mechanisms of the Ministry of External Relations of Brazil (ASPA Regional Coordinator for South America).

The High Officials reviewed the progress made since the Second ASPA Summit, including the results of the First Meeting of the ASPA Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held at the sidelines of the 64th UN General Assembly (New York, September 23rd, 2009), and shared information on the activities carried out for the implementation of the commitments made in these meetings.

They took note with satisfaction of the broad participation of the Delegations of the countries of both regions in the sixth Meeting of the Council of High Officials.

They agreed on the following:

I – POLITICAL COORDINATION (1)

1. During the VI Meeting of the Council of High Officials, Arab and South American Delegates made interventions and discussed items of mutual interest on the international agenda, particularly those related to their Regions. In this context, they:

1.2 Reaffirmed their commitments towards the decisions expressed in the “Doha Declaration”, of the Second ASPA Summit, concerning political coordination; they also referred to the statement issued during the I Meeting of the ASPA Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which recalled the need to freeze the building of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

1.3 Recommended that all the member-States consider the possibility of undertaking efforts to establish diplomatic relations with each other, taking into account the progress made in inter-regional dialogue and cooperation.

(1) The Delegation of Argentina made a reservation regarding the Political Coordination Chapter, to include the following text: “*They call on the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to resume negotiations in order to find, as soon as possible, a fair, peaceful and lasting solution to the sovereignty dispute referred to as “Question of the Malvinas Islands”, in accordance with the many relevant UN Resolutions. They further state that oil exploration and exploitation activities that are being carried out by the United Kingdom in the continental shelf around the Malvinas Islands are incompatible with the provisions of Resolution 31/49 of the UNGA, which calls upon the two parties to the dispute to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation while the islands are going through the process recommended by the General Assembly.*”

1.4 Welcomed the signing of the Framework Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Justice and Equality Movement, in Doha, on February 23rd 2010, with a view to resolving the conflict in Darfur, under the auspices of His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al-Thani.⁽²⁾

1.5 Expressed their solidarity with the Government and the people of Chile for the devastating earthquake that struck that country on the date of this meeting, February 27th, 2010.

II – COOPERATION INITIATIVES

2. Economic Cooperation

2.1 Welcomed the confirmation by the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States of its offer to finance the first ASPA study, on the matter of “Air and maritime connectivity among Arab and South American regions”. This will be executed within three months.

2.2 Welcomed the confirmation of the following events, as well as the offer of the respective venues:

- i) Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, in Jordan, date to be announced by the end of 2010. In order to prepare for this meeting, Egypt offered to hold a technical seminar on this subject during 2010, as well as a follow-up meeting after the Ministerial Meeting in Jordan;
- ii) Seminar/Ministerial Meeting on Energy and Mining, in the United Arab Emirates, level and date to be announced shortly by that country;
- iii) Seminar on Capital Markets, in Chile, in 2010, date to be confirmed by that country to the Regional Coordinator, after the inauguration of the President-elect of the Republic of Chile, next April;
- iv) Seminar on Transportation, in Paraguay, likely to be held late November-early December 2010, once the results of the study on “Air and maritime connectivity among Arab and South American regions” is made available.

2.3 Took note that the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States received remarks/replies from Ecuador, Colombia and Bolivia regarding the draft Memorandum of Understanding, proposed by the Arab side (paragraph 64 of “Doha Declaration”) to be signed between LAS and UNASUR to prompt tourism between both regions, and awaits further remarks/replies from the South American Countries to finalize the drafting of the MOU to be presented to the Arab Ministerial Council for Tourism that will convene on 26-27 May 2010 in Alexandria/Egypt.

2.4 Took note of the United Arab Emirates' satisfaction with the election of Abu Dhabi as the headquarters of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). In this context, reaffirmed the importance of the utilization of renewable energy, in which both regions are rich, as a driving force for sustainable development and one of the solutions to the problems that arise as a consequence of climate change. Also welcomed the UAE's invitation for ASPA member-States to benefit from the Institute of Masdar for Special Studies related to Renewable Energy, located in Masdar City, Abu Dhabi.

⁽²⁾The Delegation of Colombia entered a reservation on paragraph 1.4 of this Report, arguing that it did not have enough time to make the respective consultations and express its views in this respect.

2.5 Reiterated their interest in holding the III Meeting of Ministers of Economy of South American and Arab Countries, after the III ASPA Summit, scheduled for February 16th, 2011.

2.6 Decided to include the subject of agriculture in the field of Economic Cooperation and requested that the “Rabat Plan of Action” be updated to reflect this change.

2.7 Received with satisfaction the reports of the ASPA Regional Coordinators on their meeting at the sidelines of the WIPO General Assembly (Geneva, September 21st, 2009), to develop a preliminary proposal of bi-regional cooperation in the field of intellectual property, and on the ensuing meeting held in Beirut (October 14-15, 2009). Endorse the proposal of the Regional Coordinators that bi-regional cooperation on intellectual property center on the following actions: (a) coordinating positions in international *fora* on topics of common interest; (b) establishing a common database on patent information, management experiences and legislation; (c) establishing regular interchange between the national institutions in charge of intellectual property in ASPA member-States. Regarding point (c), welcome the offer of Brazil to host a meeting of intellectual property management institutions, in 2010, whose date and exact venue will be informed in due time.

2.8 Took note of the progress made in the debate of a Treaty on Exceptions and Limitations for the Visually Impaired within the World Intellectual Property Organization, proposed by Brazil, Ecuador and Paraguay, and stressed the importance of continuing to work on a concrete and expeditious solution to the lack of access to copyright protected works by persons with visual disabilities.

2.9 Welcomed the proposal of the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) to host, during September 2010, possibly in Doha, the ASPA Meeting on Industrial Cooperation.

3. Environmental Cooperation

3.1 Expressed their satisfaction with the confirmation of the holding of the following seminars, which are listed in the “Joint Biannual Executive Program for Environmental Cooperation” (paragraph 41 of the Final Report of the Fifth ASPA High Officials Meeting):

- i) “Water Desalination Technologies”, in Saudi Arabia, April 11-14, 2010.
- ii) “Techniques and technologies to limit and adapt to climate change”, in Damascus, Syria, April 14-15, 2010.

3.2 Took note that the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States reported that it will try to schedule both seminars in dates that do not coincide, so as to allow the experts of both regions to attend the two meetings.

3.3 Welcomed the announcement of the Arab Republic of Egypt regarding the possibility of hosting a seminar on “Cleaner production technologies and clean development mechanisms (CDM)”, which could take place in late 2010.

3.4 Welcomed the Brazilian invitation for Arab and South American Ministers in Charge of Environmental Affairs to participate in the II International Conference: Climate, Sustainability and Development in Semi-arid Regions (ICID 2010), to be held in Fortaleza, in the period of 16-20 August 2010; in this regard, proposed that, in the sidelines of ICID, the ASPA Ministers formalize their approval of cooperation initiatives concerning water desalination technologies and techniques to limit and adapt to climate change, inspired on the discussions held during the seminars on those matters that will take place in Saudi Arabia and Syria, respectively. A draft of the document to be submitted to the Ministers could be presented and discussed during the VII Meeting of the Council of ASPA High Officials.

3.5 Approved the creation of an “ad hoc” Subcommittee on Combating Desertification within the Committee on Environmental Cooperation, in the terms described in the “Final Report of the Meeting of South American Focal Points of the UNCCD to develop a proposal of cooperation within ASPA”, circulated and presented to the ASPA member-States during the VI Meeting of the Council of High Officials.

3.6 Welcomed the announcement of the South American Coordinator that Argentina and Brazil are producing a chapter on “Land Degradation in South American Countries”, to be included in the project of Land Degradation Monitoring and Assessment in the Arab Region and South America (LAMAARSA). The matter is under the responsibility of the UNCCD Focal Points of both countries, who are parties of the ASPA Subcommittee on Combating Desertification and are holding consultations with the Focal Points of other UNASUR member-States on this matter.

3.7 The General Secretariat of the League of Arab States presented two updated conceptual papers regarding the projects proposed during the Meeting of the Committee on Environmental Cooperation held at the COP/UNCCD, in Buenos Aires: “Socioeconomical and environmental development for vulnerable areas subject to drifting sand” and “Sustainable management approach for mitigation of the negative impact of drought in dry lands”. The General Secretariat requests remarks/replies from the South American side.

4. Scientific and Technological Cooperation

4.1 Welcomed the report of the Regional Coordinators on their meeting at the sidelines of the International Conference on Internet Governance (Sharm El-Sheik, 15-18 November, 2009) to develop a preliminary proposal of cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Approved their proposal of focusing bi-regional cooperation initially in the fields of e-government and open source software. In this context, welcomed the interest of the Regional Coordinators to hold a seminar focused on e-government and open source software, the date and venue of which to be announced in the future.

4.2 Accepted the proposal of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States to hold consultations in international *fora* to coordinate positions regarding different issues in their agendas and concerning nominations for international positions; in this regard, referred to the upcoming conference of the International Telecommunication Union (India, May 2010) and to the Plenipotentiary Conference (Mexico, end of 2010).

5. Cultural and Educational Cooperation

5.1 Approved that the Committee on Cultural Cooperation be henceforth named “Committee on Cultural and Educational Cooperation”, to reflect the many instances in which culture and education intertwine and are dealt with together, as well as the matters addressed in international *fora* such as the UNESCO.

5.2 Welcomed the outcome of the Meeting of the ASPA Committee on Cultural and Educational Cooperation, held at the sidelines of the 35th UNESCO General Conference (Paris, October 14th, 2009), and the suggestion of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States to create a “Contact Group” for the representatives of both regions at the aforementioned Organization. The League of Arab States’ mission in Paris will be gathering suggestions from both regions at UNESCO to outline a plan of action that shall include holding periodical meetings to examine specific issues related to the activities of UNESCO and of the Arab and South American countries.

5.3 Approved the “Rio Plan of Action for Cultural Cooperation” and decided that the activities therein listed will be subject to continuous updating, via Internet; in this context, welcomed the offer of Brazil to host an online version of the “Rio Plan of Action” at the website of the Library-Center for Research of South American-Arab Culture (BibliASPA), at www.bibliaspa.com.br, whose content will

be updated in coordination with the South American and Arab Co-Chairs of the Committee on Cultural and Educational Cooperation.

5.4 Welcomed the presentation made by Brazil of the activities programmed for the “First Arab Culture Festival”, which will take place in the cities of São Paulo, Campinas, Santos and São José do Rio Preto in the period of 20-30 March 2010, in the context of the first celebrations of the “National Day of the Arab Community” (March 25th); took note with satisfaction of the opening, on March 25th, of the new BibliASPAs premises (the “BibliASPAs Cultural Space”), whose facilities will offer 15 rooms for holding exhibitions, lectures, courses and consultation of bibliographic and multimedia materials; express appreciation for Brazil’s invitation to incorporate to the program of the Arab Culture Festival artists from Arab and South American countries, as well as its offer to transfer the shows and exhibitions included in its program to other ASPA member-States.

5.5 Welcomed the offer of Brazil to host the Seminar “Dialogue among Arab and South American countries” during the II Arab Culture Festival, in March 2011.

5.6 Approved the proposals of the ASPA Literature, Cinema and Music Prizes, which constitute privileged mechanisms to bridge cultural differences and civilization gaps, and to promote mutual understanding, one of the main objectives of bi-regional dialogue; decide that, in order to organize these Prizes efficiently, the Committee on Cultural Cooperation shall discuss the matter in its next meeting. They encouraged all ASPA member-States to suggest names of distinguished artists in the areas of cinema, literature and music for the first editions of the Prizes.

5.7 Welcomed the announcement made by Ecuador to organize a cultural activity on the occasion of the III ASPA Summit to be held in Lima, Peru, on February 16, 2011.

5.8 Took note of the information supplied by the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States that it has asked the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), in Tunisia, whether it could hold the I Meeting of ASPA Ministers of Education (paragraph 108 of the “Doha Declaration”); the response is still pending.

5.9 During the discussions concerning cultural cooperation, the Arab countries presented a brief report and expressed their deep concern for what they deemed as the current conditions of the cultural, historical and religious heritage sites in the Old City of Jerusalem and other Christian and Muslim Sites, and in this context they reiterated the terms of paragraph 14 of the Río Communiqué on Cultural Cooperation, approved on the occasion of the II Meeting of ASPA Ministers of Culture (Rio de Janeiro, May 20-21, 2009), as well as of Resolution 34/C, Resolution 47 and 181 EX/ Decision 5 (III) of the Executive Board of UNESCO, relating to the Ascent to the Mughrabi Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem.

In this regard, the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, as Regional Coordinator of the Arab countries, presented the principles listed below for further coordination and follow-up, and requested the support of the South American Group within the appropriate ASPA mechanisms to:

- Reaffirm the importance of respecting the integrity of the cultural, historical and religious heritage of the City of Jerusalem;
- Stress in this regard that no measures, unilateral or otherwise, should be taken which will affect the authenticity and the integrity of Christian and Muslim Sites, in accordance with the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972 and the relevant provisions on the protection of cultural heritage of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954;

- Reiterate that the executive board of UNESCO follows up on its monitoring of the conditions in such sites with the support of the international community and the technical assistance of the World Heritage Center. ⁽³⁾

6. Social Cooperation

6.1 The Brazilian Delegation presented a report on the organization of the II Meeting of Ministers of Social Affairs and Development, scheduled to take place in Brasília, on 1-2 March 2010. The Draft Annotated Agenda of the meeting and the proposals of "Final Communiqué" and "Plan of Action" were distributed to all member-States.

7. Follow up mechanisms.

7.1. Structure and composition of the Sectorial Committees

7.1.1. Agreed on the need to standardize the structure and the attributions of the ASPA Sectorial Committees. In this sense, examined the proposal of Brazil for the "Structure of the Committee on Social Cooperation" (annexed to this Report) and suggested that it be discussed at the VII Meeting of the Council of High Officials, so as to decide on its possible adoption as a model for all ASPA Sectorial Committees, namely the Committee on Economic Cooperation, the Committee on Cultural and Educational Cooperation, the Committee on Environmental Cooperation, and the Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation. With regard to the designation of Co-Chairs for the Sectorial Committees, took note of the interest of Ecuador to chair the Committee on Cultural Cooperation, of Chile to chair the Committee on Social Cooperation, and of Brazil to chair the Committee on Environmental Cooperation from the South American side.

8. Scheduled meetings

8.1 They agreed that the Regional Coordinators be in charge of coordinating the definition of the venue and the date of the VII Meeting of the Council of High Officials. The General Secretariat of the League of Arab States expressed its willingness to host this meeting at the last week of July/first week of August at its Headquarters in Cairo.

8.2 They welcomed the information submitted by the National Executive Secretary of Peru for the III ASPA Summit, Ambassador María Susana Landaveri, in the sense that the invitations for this event that will take place in Lima, on February 16, 2011, have already been sent to the respective countries.

8.3 They thanked the Government of Ecuador for its hospitality and generosity and for its efforts to make this meeting successful.

Quito, 27th February 2010

⁽³⁾ The Delegation of Colombia entered a reservation regarding the paragraphs related to the religious, historical and cultural heritage sites in the Old City of Jerusalem, in the Cultural Cooperation Chapter of this Final Report, arguing that it did not have enough time to make the respective consultations and express its views in this respect.

ANNEX

STRUCTURE OF THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL COOPERATION

I – STRUCTURE

a) Members of the Committee:

The Committee on Social Cooperation, a Sectorial Committee of ASPA, as defined in paragraph 119, 'd', of the "Doha Declaration", shall be formed by experts in social affairs of all ASPA Member State (henceforth called "Focal Points"), designated by the Governments of the ASPA member-States.

b) Chairs of the Committee:

There shall be two Chairs of the ASPA Committee on Social Cooperation, one for each region, to be chosen by the ASPA Council of High Officials in its first meeting after an ASPA Summit is held; the mandate of the Chairs will last for the period between one ASPA Summit and another; any changes of Regional Chairs prior to the end of their mandate shall be submitted to the Council of High Officials.

II – ATTRIBUTIONS

a) Of the Committee:

- i) discuss proposals of actions and projects of social cooperation in ASPA, with a view to detailing their characteristics and means of implementation, establishing partnerships, deadlines and responsibilities for their implementation;
- ii) assess problems and analyze situations that might obstruct or delay the implementation of actions/projects, with a view to finding solutions;
- iii) discuss financial responsibilities toward the implementation of actions/projects, with a view to formulating proposals for the appreciation of the ASPA Council of High Officials;
- iv) constitute subcommittees to address specific matters and tasks which the Committee on Social Cooperation or the Council of High Officials may find relevant.

b) Of the Chairs of the Committee:

- i) receive and distribute projects and proposals of actions/projects of social cooperation among the ASPA Member States;
- ii) follow-up on the implementation of such actions and present an updated report to all Member States in the meetings of the Committee on Social Cooperation and higher instances, such as the Council of High Officials, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and in Meetings of Ministers of Social Affairs;
- iii) establish the date and location of regular and extraordinary Meetings of the Committee on Social Cooperation;
- iv) request the presentation of a report or the detailing of an action or its implementation by a State that has accepted responsibility for it in regular ASPA meetings;
- v) submit reports and decisions of the Committee on Social Cooperation to the Council of High Officials Meeting for approval.