

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE OPERATION OF THE COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES

Document approved by the Heads of State and Government of CELAC,
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The Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States:

- 1.** Highlighting our commitment of coordination and convergence to carry out joint actions in defence of the permanent interests of our States.
- 2.** Determined to build a common space with the aim of deepening political, economic, social and cultural integration of our region, to revitalize and strengthen regional unity, by establishing goals and mechanisms compatible with its reality, as well as to develop ties of solidarity and cooperation among the Latin American and Caribbean countries.
- 3.** Renewing, in order to undertake such common actions, our conviction in the validity of the shared principles and adopted agreements, which are part of the historical heritage of our Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), as expressed in all the declarations and communiqués of the Rio Group and the Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean on Integration and Development from their own origins.
- 4.** Reaffirming our irrevocable commitment with peace, the strengthening of democracy and the impulse to the social and economic development of our peoples; convinced that greater integration among our nations is a guarantee to materialize these hopes and promoting peaceful coexistence among our nations.
- 5.** Determined to continue generating our own solutions to common problems and to strengthen the negotiating capacity of our countries before the international community.
- 6.** Ratifying the Declaration of the Unity Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted at the Mayan Riviera, Mexico, on 23 February 2010, which is the founding document of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the following Rules of Procedure for the Operation of CELAC are hereby adopted:

I. Bodies

CELAC shall consist of the following bodies:

- 1.** Summit of Heads of State and Government
- 2.** Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs
- 3.** Pro Tempore Presidency
- 4.** Meeting of National Coordinators
- 5.** Specialized Meetings
- 6.** Extended Troika

1. Summit of Heads of State and Government

1.1. The Summit of Heads of State and Government shall be the supreme body of the Community. It shall meet regularly in the country holding the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC and on an extraordinary basis, when the Pro Tempore Presidency in consultation with the Member States shall convene it. The Pro Tempore Presidency may convene Summit Meetings and extraordinary meetings in consultation with the Extended Troika.

1.2. Its responsibilities are:

a. To designate the State to host the next meeting and that will serve as Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC.

b. To define guidelines, policies, priorities, and establish strategies and action plans to achieve the objectives of CELAC.

c. To adopt policy guidelines and strategies for relations with third countries or other organizations or international, regional or subregional intergovernmental forums.

d. To approve the modification of procedures and amendments required to facilitate the operation of CELAC.

e. To promote citizen participation in CELAC.

2. Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs

2.1. This Meeting will regularly take place twice a year, being able to convene extraordinary meetings, if necessary, at the request of a member State.

2.2. Its responsibilities are:

a. To adopt resolutions and issue statements on regional or international topics that are of interest to the countries in the region.

b. To adopt resolutions to implement the decisions and statements of the Summit of Heads of State and Government.

c. To adopt draft statements and decisions to be approved at the Summit of Heads of State and Government.

d. To prepare the Summits of Heads of State and Government.

e. To coordinate joint positions of member countries in multilateral forums, political spaces and international negotiations to promote the Latin American and Caribbean agenda.

f. To decide on the formation of open-ended working groups, permanent or temporary, for the achievement of its objectives.

g. To promote and develop political dialogue and consensus on issues of interest to CELAC.

h. To define and approve topics and issues of priority interest to CELAC, as well as studies and working groups for their legal and technical support.

i. To follow up and analyse the process of unity and integration as a whole, as well as to follow up and enforce the declarations and decisions of the Summit of Heads of State and Government, and enhance the unity and cooperation for the development of our peoples.

j. To monitor and evaluate the implementation of action plans.

k. To adopt the biennial Work Programme of CELAC activities, which may include specialized meetings.

l. To implement policy guidelines and strategies for relations with other governmental actors or international organizations.

m. To delegate tasks and responsibilities in the bodies and working groups that are created to carry out specific tasks, where necessary.

n. To propose legislation for CELAC and amendments to it, in consideration of its historical heritage.

o. To approve programs, projects and initiatives on integration, cooperation, complementarity and development, submitted by member States and to be presented to the Summit of Heads of State and Government for adoption.

p. To encourage communication, complementarity, cooperation and articulation between subregional integration mechanisms, and receive, for its consideration, the results of the meetings held by these organisms as requested by the Pro Tempore Presidency, using, to that end, their institutional structures.

- q. To coordinate and promote joint positions on central issues of interest to CELAC.

3. Pro Tempore Presidency

3.1. For the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 periods, the Pro Tempore Presidency shall be held for periods of one year and Summit meetings shall be held in the years 2012 and 2013. In the 2013 Summit, the Heads of State and Government shall decide how often the Summits shall be held and for what period the Pro Tempore Presidency shall be exercised.

3.2. The Pro Tempore Presidency is the institutional, technical and administrative support for CELAC, and its functions, among others, are:

a. To prepare, convene and preside over the Summit of Heads of State and Government, the Meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and National Coordinators, as well as the Meetings of Regional and Subregional Integration Mechanisms.

b. To implement the decisions of the Summit of Heads of State and Government and the Meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

c. To ensure continuity and follow up of the work of the Community, informing member States.

d. To organize and coordinate CELAC meetings.

e. To coordinate CELAC permanent activities.

f. To submit for consideration of the Summit of Heads of State and Government, Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Meeting of National Coordinators, the biennial Work Programme of CELAC activities, with dates, venues and agendas of meetings of its bodies.

g. To follow up on the agreements reached at each meeting.

h. To prepare working papers on topics of interest to CELAC.

i. To issue, register and organize official documents and messages and maintain official communication with member States.

j. To establish itself as a recipient of the Community's heritage, as well as the heritage of the Rio Group and the CALC.

k. To support CELAC bodies in fulfilling their duties.

l. To prepare and present the Annual Report and the respective reports to the authorities of CELAC.

m. To prepare and issue the minutes at the end of each meeting.

n. To ensure that all official documentation be submitted to member States in a timely manner and in all official languages of CELAC.

o. The Pro Tempore Presidency may convene a Meeting of the Regional and Sub Regional Integration Mechanisms, share information, coordinate their tasks, avoid duplicity and intensify dialogue in order to enhance the unity and integration and accelerate regional development in priority areas for CELAC.

3.3. The host State of the Pro Tempore Presidency shall assume the expenses incurred for its operation.

3.4. The host State of the Pro Temporary Presidency shall create and maintain an official website for CELAC, on which, among other things, CELAC statements will be published.

4. Meeting of National Coordinators

4.1. Member States shall be linked to the Pro Tempore Presidency through the National Coordinators, who shall be responsible for the coordination and direct monitoring of the topics under discussion.

4.2. Each country shall designate a head National Coordinator and as many alternates as it deems necessary.

4.3. They shall meet ordinarily at least twice a year before each meeting of Foreign Ministers and extraordinarily, when required.

4.4. As a rule, the Meetings of National Coordinators shall take place in the country holding the Pro Tempore Presidency unless, at its proposal and in agreement with the member States, another venue is decided.

4.5. Its responsibilities are:

a. To coordinate, at the national level, issues of unity, dialogue and regional political consensus of interest to the CELAC agenda.

b. To act as liaison and coordination for issues of unity, political consensus and dialogue.

c. To act as liaison and coordination for the programmes, projects and initiatives towards integration, cooperation and development.

d. To implement, through adoption of the relevant provisions, the decisions of the Summit of Heads of State and Government and the resolutions of the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, with the support of the Pro Tempore Presidency.

e. To prepare the Meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

f. To prepare draft statements, decisions, resolutions, and regulations for consideration by the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

g. To coordinate CELAC initiatives with other existing processes of regional and subregional integration, in order to promote complementarity of efforts.

h. To organise, coordinate and follow up on the Working Groups.

i. To follow up on political dialogue and consensus on issues of regional and international interest.

j. To follow up on and coordinate specific cooperation and development projects that are within CELAC's scope.

k. Open-ended working groups can be formed in compliance with the mandates and recommendations of the relevant agencies.

l. Such agencies shall report on their findings to the National Coordinators, who will submit this information to the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

m. To be informed of the results from the Meetings of Regional and Subregional Integration Mechanisms and to submit them for the consideration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

5. Specialized Meetings

5.1. Specialized meetings shall address areas of interest and other priority areas for the promotion of unity, integration and regional cooperation, and will be attended by Senior Officials with enough decision-making capacity to meet the objectives of CELAC.

5.2. The Pro Tempore Presidency shall convene such meetings in accordance with the provisions of the CELAC biennial Work Programme.

5.3. These bodies shall report the results of their work to the Meeting of National Coordinators, who shall submit such results to the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

5.4. If necessary, such meetings could be preceded by preparatory technical meetings.

6. Extended Troika

6.1. The Presidency Pro Tempore shall be assisted by an Extended Troika comprised by the State holding the Presidency Pro Tempore, the State that previously held this responsibility and the one that will succeed as Presidency Pro Tempore, plus a member State of CARICOM represented by the country exercising its Presidency Pro Tempore.

6.2. The Extended Troika shall be automatically created at the time of election of the Member State who will preside over the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC.

II. Decisions

1. All decisions shall be taken by consensus at all instances.

2. Decisions shall be documented in writing and shall take the form of declarations, decisions, joint and special communiqués, resolutions or any other instrument of decision that is determined by mutual agreement. All decisions have the character of political agreements and constitute mandates.

III. Urgent Consultation Mechanism

1. For the sake of fast and expedient pronouncements by CELAC in case of unforeseen events that deserve urgent attention, the Pro Tempore Presidency or any member State may, through the Pro Tempore Presidency, propose the adoption of a declaration or statement to be circulated by the Pro Tempore Presidency to the members of the Extended Troika, which shall issue an opinion on the convenience or inconvenience of pronouncing on a specific topic. Once having the favourable opinion of the Extended Troika, the draft declaration or statement must be consulted and agreed with all Member States, through the National Coordinators, establishing, when possible, a minimum twelve-hour deadline for consultations between the Pro Tempore Presidency and the Extended Troika and the same period for consultation with member States. Consultations are made on the principle that if there is no observation or objection within this period, the proposal shall be regarded as tacitly approved.

2. It is the duty of the Pro Tempore Presidency to deal with requests made by member States.

IV. Links with other regions

1. CELAC shall assume the following responsibilities in the relations and dialogue of the Community with other countries and regional groups:

1.1. Political dialogue with other intergovernmental actors, international organizations and mechanisms.

1.2. Coordination of common positions in multilateral forums to promote and advance the interests of the Latin American and Caribbean community vis-à-vis the new issues on the international agenda.

1.3. Promotion of the Latin American and Caribbean agenda at global forums.

1.4. Positioning of Latin America and the Caribbean at important events.

1.5. The Pro Tempore Presidency shall coordinate annual dialogues with other regional blocs and countries that play a predominant role in the international community.

2. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States constitutes the representative mechanism of Latin America and the Caribbean and, as such, shall assume dialogue in these forums, without prejudice to those that may emerge:

2.1. Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean-European Union (ALC-UE).

2.2. Institutionalized Ministerial Dialogue between the Rio Group and the European Union.

2.3. Dialogues that the Rio Group has had with countries or groups of countries within the framework of meetings that are held on occasion of the United Nations General Assembly.

V. Languages

The official languages of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States will be Dutch, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. The working languages are English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

VI. Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

Any member State may propose amendments to these rules of Procedure by written notice from its Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Pro Tempore Presidency. These proposals shall be analysed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs who shall put forward recommendations to the consideration of the Heads of State and Government, who shall make a decision.

VII. Incorporation of the historical heritage of the Rio Group and CALC

The historical heritage of CELAC shall be composed of the declarations, joint and special communiqués, resolutions and other decision-making instruments approved during the processes of the Rio Group and CALC. Attached to these rules of Procedure are: the list of topics, statements and documents that have been discussed at CALC and the Rio Group, which constitute the historical heritage of both mechanisms.

VIII. Unification of the Rio Group and CALC

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States is, for all purposes, the successor of the Permanent Mechanism for Political Consultation and Consensus (Rio Group) and the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development (CALC). Therefore, the Rio Group and the CALC shall cease functioning, without affecting the continuity of on-going programs and actions that have been agreed by the Rio Group and the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development.

IX. Transitional Provisions

1. Pending conclusion of the deadline established in the Declaration of Unity, adopted at the Mayan Riviera, on 23 February 2010, the agreed Summit shall be held in Chile in 2012, country which shall hold the first Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC until that date.

2. The appointment of the first Troika for the 2011-2012 shall consist of the State which has been designated to hold the Pro Tempore Presidency for the 2012-2013 period, the last State that held the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Rio Group and the State that held the Presidency of CALC.

3. With the adoption of these rules of Procedure, the process of establishing the Community of Latin American and Caribbean (CELAC) has concluded.

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