

THE
CARTER CENTER



**Friends of the
Inter-American
Democratic
Charter**



**The Carter Center
International IDEA
Friends of the Inter-American Democratic Charter**

**Recommendations to the 37th OAS General Assembly
Panama June 3-5, 2007**

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, respectfully submit to the foreign ministers of the Americas as they gather in Panama for the 37th General Assembly of the Organization of Americas States the following recommendations:

To preserve and promote democracy in the Western Hemisphere:

1. Member states are urged to embrace the Secretary General's report on the Inter-American Democratic Charter [Report of the Secretary General pursuant to resolutions AG/RES. 2154 (XXXV-O/05) and AG/RES. 2251 (XXXVI-O/06)] and convene a special meeting of the Permanent Council with the participation of select experts from civil society and representatives of different branches of government to move toward implementation of the recommendations therein.

In particular we find merit in the following suggestions in that report:

- a. That member states should define more explicitly the terms "unconstitutional interruption of the democratic order" and "unconstitutional alteration of the constitutional regime" (Art. 19), identifying which situations constitute grounds for OAS action under the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and should reflect upon the suggestions made by experts and civil society organizations concerning the circumstances when action may be appropriate.
 - b. That in reference to who may seek assistance under the Charter, the term "government" should be understood to refer to all branches of state and not merely the Executive branch.
 - c. That thematic reporting of the kind now undertaken on human rights, women's equality, press freedom and the like should be expanded to cover a broad range of democratic attributes, particularly those mentioned in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.
2. Given member states' commitment to holding periodic free and fair elections as articulated in the Inter-American Democratic Charter, membership within the OAS should endorse a voluntary protocol to provide for standing invitations to the OAS to send an international election observation mission to monitor elections at any level, including special elections for constituent assemblies and referenda, whenever they may be held. Observation missions should be invited to remain in the country for a period of time before and after the election sufficient to complete proper assessment of the entire election process. This voluntary protocol would allow the OAS to plan and raise funds for election observation missions with sufficient advance preparation and on a more predictable schedule.

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