

ALLIANCE-OAS LIAISON COMMITTEE
By: Helena T.M. Richards, Committee Chairperson
2006-2008

California, June 2007

I am pleased to share with all my Pan American Sisters a brief account about this Committee. It has been eight months since we started this biennium and I can assure you that we have been quite active during this period of time.

First of all, it is important to point out that we have received great support from our Director General and also from the Members of our Committee and our Delegates. The Committee By-laws clearly specify that one of our important functions is to act as exclusive intermediary between the Alliance and the OAS. Thus, members and officers of the Board abstain from corresponding directly with the OAS headquarters. That is the Committee's job, in order to maintain a united front as an organization of civil society.

However, it is quite appropriate to get in touch with the local OAS representatives within each country, in order to promote mutual cooperation. Contact has already been established in various places, such as: Santo Domingo, Mexico, Peru, Costa Rica, etc. In fact, PART members from Costa Rica have received much support from Ambassador Zuquilanda, OAS representative in Costa Rica. Furthermore, we sent a letter of introduction to Ambassador Oscar Maurtua, OAS representative in Mexico and he gave a cordial welcome to our Zone IIIB Committee member, Mrs. Maria Luisa G. de Garay. Both Ambassador Zuquilanda and Ambassador Maurtua have surpassed our expectations, granting PART members the use of a well equipped office within the OAS headquarters in San Jose, C.R. and in Mexico City.

Our Committee depends greatly on delegates that represent the Alliance in various hemispheric meetings sponsored by the OAS. Delegates are assigned by the Chairperson with the approval of the Director General. We try to choose members who live near the site of the meetings in order to reduce expenses. Lately, we have participated in:

1. CIM's International Convention in San Salvador – Delegate: Beatriz Sepe.
2. Conference on the Environment in Santa Cruz, Bolivia – Delegate: Ursula Wille.
3. Conference on Governance in Santiago – Delegates: Nhury Gutierrez, N. Hernandez
4. Conference on Transparency in Caracas- Delegates: Marta Gonzales, L. Caceres
5. Hemispheric Forum in Washington – Delegates: Fabiola Chiriboga, Cecilia Pareja
6. Lectures of the Americas in Washington – Delegates: Fabiola Chiriboga, Braulia Espinoza and Mary Ann Palka.
7. OAS General Assembly in Panama – Delegate: Marielos Gonzales de Guntanis.

Alliance delegates have an important role at these meetings. We have VOICE, we cooperate with other delegates and we discuss issues with the official governments' representatives and OAS officers. We also share information about the Alliance, our objectives and our accomplishments. Thus, our presence is appreciated within the realm of the continental group of people that struggle to raise the standard of living of citizens.

Our OAS Registration is not permanent. It has to be renewed every year through the compliance of various specific requirements, such as presenting an annual Report to the OAS about Alliance activities and participation in hemispheric events. So far, we have complied with the requirements and let's hope we shall continue doing so, in order to retain this privilege.

It is fair to say that we offer more benefits to the OAS than the amount of benefits we receive from it. We practice mutual cooperation and our contributions are highly appreciated and taken into consideration. Our Founder would be very proud to know that we are now diligently participating in so many OAS activities, in view of the fact that the First Table was structured after the Pan American Union, today's OAS.

This is a very general description, which I hope will give you an idea of our place, inside the OAS and within the general hemispheric picture.

“ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ONE”,

Fondly, HELENA